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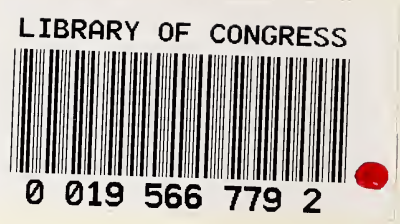
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

A

# WORD IN SEASON

IN BEHALF OF THE

# *HOLY SCRIPTURES;*

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A BRIEF REPLY TO THE "OBSERVATIONS" OF FRIEND EDWARD COBB.

BY ASA RAND,
PASTOR OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN GORHAM.

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world." 1 JOHN 4, 1.

*PORTLAND:*
PRINTED BY A. & J. SHIRLEY.
1818.

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# INTRODUCTION.

THE following pages owe their origin to a conviction that some small publication is needed, to establish the authority of the scriptures against prevailing pretences to new revelations, and that particular circumstances seem lately to devolve on me the task which I had waited for others to perform. Of the *necessity* of such a publication, I leave every reader to judge from his own knowledge of existing opinions in this part of the country. The *circumstances* to which I allude are these. About the commencement of the year 1817, I published "two Sermons on Christian Fellowship;" in which I objected to many prevailing sentiments in several sects of professed Christians, and pointed out the neglect of the bible and the credit given to supposed new revelations as the *grand error* from which the others in general originate. But the subject was not then pursued by any means to the extent its importance demands; and I have frequently been solicited by judicious friends, to *follow up* that publication with such an one as I now present on the general subject. At length I concluded to make the attempt.

So far as the vindication of my Sermons is concerned, I would just observe, I have thought proper to subjoin to this little work a brief Reply to the "Observations" of Friend Cobb; the only publication that has, to my knowledge, appeared in answer to them. I now judge such a reply to be proper, though my first impressions were different. Many persons will probably neglect searching the scriptures for themselves, and it may be a friendly aid to such to present before them scriptural evidence in a connected form. The *first part* of this book will therefore contain a vindication of my sermons against the objections of the *Quakers*. I still leave the sermons to speak for themselves in regard to all other denominations of whom they ventured to speak at all. They first appeared indeed under *three* disadvantages. They wanted, (before the public,) a full and explicit *statement of my own views* of gospel truths; with which I compared the views of others. There was a want of *references* to authorities, and *quotations* from writers, in the different sects. And I did not enter fully into *argument* to substantiate my positions, except in regard to the *conduct* of professing christians in causing divisions. The *reasons* for these deficiences were, that, in *preaching*, I had no thought of publishing; and to my constant hearers no statement of my own principles was necessary—they already knew, by hear-

ing and reading, that most of the principles I imputed to others were avowed by them, and would not hesitate to believe my declaration, if I had read or heard what they had not—and little argument, as I trusted, was needful to convince them that the doctrines I mentioned were not found in scripture. Besides, to have supplied fully all these deficiences, I must have preached at least ten sermons instead of two, and protracted a discussion on which I entered at all only from an imperious sense of duty. I was aware that it was much more important these additions should be made, when I published. But, for reasons then assigned, I would not add or diminish a word, but publish as nearly as I could, what I had preached. And if I *had* made the additions, my pamphlet would have become a volume. The sermons brought much reproach upon me from various quarters. But of reproach I shall not complain, if I can continue in the path of duty, and be of the least service to the cause of truth. I have never for a single hour, regretted either preaching or publishing. My statement is before the public—so are the books, the preaching, the conversation, and the conduct, of the denominations in question. Let the public judge. So far as I am myself concerned, I am not anxious for the issue: for whatever opinions men may form, "yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God."

I must say a word on the *delay* of my notice of the "observations." It would have appeared sooner, if I had not designed to publish it with the other part of this volume. I waited some time in expectation of a further answer to my Sermons, which was said to be intended at New-York. My engagements leave me but little time for such a concern. And after I had begun to write, an afflictive dispensation of Providence obliged me to suspend entirely all attention to the subject for several months. I have lately resumed it, and at length brought it to a close. I trust the Searcher of hearts has seen no bitterness of spirit in my heart, and that the reader will not find it in my pages. I am far from delighting in controversy; nor would I engage in it, even in the mildest form, but from the same motives which so frequently impelled the Apostle of the Gentiles, the vindication of the truth, the glory of Christ, the establishment of believers, and the salvation of sinners.

A. R.

*Gorham, October* 23, 1818.

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# PART I.

A VINDICATION OF "TWO SERMONS ON CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP," SO FAR AS THEY RELATE TO FRIENDS, OR QUAKERS; IN REPLY TO THE "OBSERVATIONS" OF FRIEND EDWARD COBB.

## CHAP. I.

### MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS ON THE "OBSERVATIONS."

UNDER this head I shall notice several things, which will not separately require whole chapters.

Friend Cobb views me as one "disposed to meddle with those who are desirous, as much as in them lies, to live peaceably with all men;" he can see no cause for my mentioning *the Friends* among others in my Sermons.—Doubtless any member of any other society, if he had replied to my pamphlet, would have exempted *his* brethren in the same manner. And I would only reply that I had precisely the same reasons for mentioning *the Friends*, that I had for mentioning the other societies; viz. that I considered some of their principles as essentially erroneous, and knew that the people among whom I labor were exposed to them. If Friend Cobb had known what pains his brethren in this town had taken to introduce their preachers and principles among the people who attend on my ministry, I am persuaded he would not have made the above remark. I feel strongly tempted to state some facts on this subject. But I forbear; for I would not, even in my own vindication as a minister of Christ, state any thing to the disadvantage of others, farther than appears fully necessary; and I would not in this connection bring any thing to view, which might prevent Friends, or others

who may read these pages, from looking at *principles* with calm and unprejudiced minds.—I trust therefore this general statement of my reasons for having noticed that society, will be sufficient; persuaded as I am, that it will not be said I have ever "meddled" with those who reside in this town, to interrupt their harmony, to inculcate my principles on them, or draw away their members or children from their faith or practice; and believing as I do, that the public will perceive this only instance of my meddling which can be produced, was intended, not to injure them, but to vindicate a course I have conscientiously adopted not to have fellowship with them in what I believe to be against scripture.

I had said, "they deny most of the doctrines of the gospel." Fr. C. [Friend Cobb] says "this is a great charge; but there is nothing in it specific." In the Introduction to this work I have shown why my Sermons did not contain a statement of the doctrines. Yet I know not how he could read both of them through attentively, without forming some opinion concerning my belief in the doctrines of the gospel. However, he correctly supposes I meant the above sentence "as a preface to the following charges." He finds "an evident contradiction" in the following sentence, viz. "They of course deny regeneration, by taking away all necessity for it. With them it is not a renewing by the holy Ghost; not a new creation by the grace of God; but only cherishing what we have had from our birth. And yet regeneration with them is so great a work, that many look for no other resurrection." And he attempts to point out the contradiction to his readers. Pages 20, 21.

I am in the habit of saying, a person denies a doctrine, when he denies the *thing meant*, though he may use the *word* by which it is commonly expressed. I well knew that the Friends talk of regeneration: but I also knew that they *mean* by it a *growth* in grace, or the "increase and operation of a living principle" which is in all men, and increases in the renewed man. Whereas the common use of the word

*regeneration* is to express an idea very different from this. It means the *renewal* of a depraved sinner, who *has* no living or holy principle in him; the renovation of his heart, his passing from death to life, so that he becomes a "new creature." I used the word in its *proper* sense in the first part of the sentence in question, and in *their* sense of it in the latter part; a practice by no means uncommon, when a word *has been* used in two senses by different persons, and we wish to speak of *both*. Nor do I see that my meaning could have been doubtful, if this writer had attended to the *explanatory* clause, "with them it is not a renewing, &c." I admitted that they believed in *some kind* of change to which they applied the term regeneration, and *explained* what they *meant* by it, and what they did *not* mean; in which it clearly appeared they did *not* mean what is usually and almost universally meant by the word *regeneration*. And that I was correct, I need only to refer to the extracts from Phipps, which Fr. C. produces in this very connection.

Fr. C. has not noticed the concluding words of the above extract from my Sermon; nor has he any where told us whether they do, or do not, look for any "other *resurrection*," than that new birth which is sometimes figuratively expressed by the term. I can find but very little on this subject in Barclay, or any other of their writers. They quote a *few* passages of scripture in relation to it; but make scarcely any comments; though they freely indulge in them on other occasions. From their silence, I cannot judge whether they understand such passages literally; or whether, as in many other cases, they spiritualize them. I apprehend that many of their followers are led from this silence to doubt or deny the resurrection of the *body*. But as public documents will not decide on individual belief, I shall leave the subject where their writers leave it, only observing that I trust they will all avoid a disbelief of this doctrine, for "if there be no resurrection of the dead, then *Christ* is not risen; and if Christ be not risen, our faith is vain, we are yet in our sins;

and they also which have fallen asleep in Christ are perished; and Paul, speaking of two men, says, "who concerning the truth have erred, saying, that the resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some."

I had said, "their ideas of religion are of a hidden, mystical, mysterious nature;" the truth of which assertion I shall leave my readers to discover from their writings in general, from the extracts which will appear in this work, or even from Fr. C's own quotations and remarks. But whether the above remark, or any other in my sermons, proves me to be a "natural man," or "grossly ignorant," or "under the influence of very uncharitable feelings," or that my "lips do not preserve truth," is perhaps a question better left with the searcher of hearts to determine, than to Fr. C. For myself, I had rather *receive* such language from a stranger, than *bestow* it upon a stranger. I had rather *bless* Fr. C., than *revile* him; and will only add, there is One that judgeth him and me.

My object in writing is rather to search for truth, than attack an opponent; to convince, rather than reproach. And if Fr. C. and his brethren will read and examine with calmness, candor, and prayer; perhaps it may not be in vain, however weak my productions may be found.

I shall take up, in the *second part* of this book, what was contained in the Sermons and Observations concerning *the scriptures and new revelations;* therefore I need not say any thing farther here on those subjects, than to entreat the Friends to read, and weigh the matter with great deliberation.

I have been censured for not giving correct views of the quaker tenets, from their own writers, as I proposed to do. The reader will be able to judge on that point, after he has perused the extracts I shall produce. I certainly intended to make a correct statement, and had read Barclay's Apology and some others. With a view to the present publication, I have sought for as many standard works as I could conveniently obtain. I solicited the loan of such books from

a Friend in this town, and mentioned my object. He readily complied with my request, and I here acknowledge my obligations to him.

## CHAP. II.

### OF SOME THINGS DEEMED WORTHY OF APPROBATION AND IMITATION IN THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

It is very common to approve or censure, to praise or condemn, *in the gross.* I have rarely met with any writer, who does this more extensively, and authoritatively than Barclay. But I cannot return evil for evil. Such a practice seems to betray a defect both in judgment and charity. If we deem it duty to object to principles or practices, or even to protest against them, and separate from those in whom they are found; still I perceive no necessity of imputing every thing to the worst of motives without evidence, or of denying to such persons *every thing* that is good, and accusing them of all evil. I trust my Sermons were of a different cast. As I am now to speak more at large of the Friends, I have no hesitation in adding a few remarks to those I there made in their favor. I highly approve of their *protest against war*, with a single exception. I agree with them that all *offensive* wars are unchristian and wicked; all wars of conquest, ambition, and revenge: and that governments should go very far in enduring injuries from other nations. I think that *defensive* war, in case of actual invasion, is justifiable. I honor them for their *protest* against the abominable practice of *enslaving men;* and for their exertions, in connection with others, to effect the *abolition of the slave trade* —I esteem them for their *objections to duelling, litigation, vain amusements, dissipation, and luxury;* for their *veracity, industry, sobriety, and the general duties of morality.* I think indeed they carry their notions respecting dress, language, and the civilities of life, to an extreme; and that they have needless scruples of conscience concerning oaths, and other

requirements by the civil magistrate. I fear also they are liable to make a self-righteousness of such little things, when adopted as essential articles of their religious creed, or as evidences of grace. I should object to their system of discipline and education, as too austere ; aiming rather to *suppress* the natural passions, than to *direct* them and *subordinate* them to higher principles. I should apprehend their children would be *overawed* to submit to their principles and regulations, or, on the other hand, *repelled* from them and from virtue, by the forbidding aspect of the system. With some exceptions of this kind, I approve many of their principles and customs, in their influence on the affairs of this life. If it be asked, how can a tree be evil, which bears such fruit? I reply, there is a great difference in that goodness which extends only to men and the affairs of this world, and that fruit which will endure unto everlasting life. Their morality seems to be rather the effect of their internal regulations, than of their peculiar tenets in religion. Their regulations are adapted to small communities ; and (the society being of recent origin,) they have as yet observed them with some degree of fidelity. In fine, if the *civil* benefit of mankind were the only object, I should be willing the quaker system, with some abatement of its severity, and some improvements, should prevail throughout the world. But to make men *good citizens in this world, and wise unto salvation also*, I should prefer that the *bible* should go forth, and *the truth as it is in Jesus* prevail. This would accomplish *both* objects at once, as " Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." I would not say their religious principles have *no* effect, in connection with their discipline, to make them a sober people ; for undoubtedly they embrace *some* truths of the bible ; and even a distorted system of religion, with such temporal aids, may produce much temporal benefit, and in some instances lead to true piety, in spite of their errors. I have " felt moved" to make this statement of things which are in my opinion,

worthy of regard, before I proceed to a discussion which will involve some objections against their principles on other points.

## CHAP. III.

### OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS WHICH THE QUAKERS REJECT.

I tender my grateful acknowledgements to Fr. C. for *confirming* my assertions that the quakers deny *Baptism*; the *Lord's Supper*; the *Christian Sabbath*; and the *Scriptures* as the Word of God, and the only revelation. However, though he admits the correctness of my statement, yet he attempts to *justify* their tenets, and to prove that they are *right* in rejecting the institutions here named. I shall reserve the vindication of the *scriptures* to the *second* part of this book. I will here take up the other three subjects in course, after I have disposed of one objection.

I am accused of inconsistency, in saying I would receive such as hold *essential* truths; and yet withholding fellowship from quakers for their disuse of ordinances, which I acknowledge are not effectual to salvation. I reply; I view the ordinances as essential to visible Church *communion*, though not to salvation. The great question before me was, with whom I ought to hold public communion? therefore it was proper to say, in that connection, that the Friends *deny* the ordinances; for it is manifest we *cannot* express fellowship, in the ordinary and most proper way, with a church that *has* no ordinances.

### SECTION 1.

*Of Water Baptism* —As Fr. C. confirms my statement, that the Friends reject this, I have only to answer their objections to it, and prove that it is an institution of our Lord. I cannot enlarge; but shall first make a few general remarks on the manner in which they support their notion. (1.) They argue that, because *John* baptized with *water*, and predicted that *Christ* should baptize with the *Spirit*, *therefore* Christ or his

disciples did *not* baptize with *water* also. But a child may see that the argument is not conclusive. John preached repentance; but Christ came to show us the Father, and die for our offences; yet that is no proof *he* did not preach *repentance* also. (2.) They argue, that because so much is said of a *spiritual* baptism, under the dispensation of Christ, *therefore* there *is no water* baptism. Inconclusive also. There is much said of *repentance;* therefore no *faith, or love* is required—is an argument equally as good. (3.) They produce many passages which mention spiritual baptism; but *omit* and *overlook* those which bring water baptism into view. But I prefer to take the *whole* counsel of God for my direction. (4.) Barclay (as well as others) has brought forward *a part* of the passages where water baptism in mentioned; but explains them so as to coincide with a *pre-conceived opinion* that there is no such thing. His principal method for effecting this is to "*spiritualize*" scripture; or find an abstruse and far-fetched meaning in plain, simple, and decisive language. He finds it in *commands and precepts*, which we should suppose would be given in clear terms; and even in *narrative*, where the sacred writers are simply relating *facts*. (5.) They *reason* the ordinance away, because it is not sufficient for salvation. We all know that spiritual baptism or sanctification is alone that holiness, without which we cannot see God. But, *as a means*, God may surely adopt whatever he pleases, and can and does make it useful. Many have found great benefit from this ordinance (and the other also.) But if I *saw* no use, I would obey my Lord's command, not daring to call that a carnal ordinance, a beggarly element, which he instituted at the very time he "took away" the Jewish rites.

Let my reader peruse any of the quaker writings on this subject, with the above remarks in view; let him also read the scriptures which they quote, *in their connection*; and he will be convinced my remarks are correct. Of course, he will conclude that the sentiment which they establish by *such* methods, is erroneous. I will now quote a few passages which

I cannot myself spiritualize or explain away, by any lawful method of commenting on scripture. The first shall be our ascending Lord's commission to his Apostles, Matt. 28. 19. "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Quaker writers say this is spiritual baptism, because——there was no other. The inquiry however is, how did the *Apostles* understand him? And this is determined by their *practice*; for doubtless they obeyed him. He did not however now enjoin what they had not known before, and practiced. For John 3. 22. "After these things, came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized." ver. 26. They said to John, "to whom thou barest witness, behold the same baptizeth, and all men come to him." Chap 4. 2. "Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples." Did not Jesus baptize with the Holy Spirit? or would his disciples baptize without his order? This therefore was not spiritual baptism. And what did the disciples *after* his ascension? To the trembling inquiring Jews, Peter said, Acts 2. 38. "Repent, and *be baptized*, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Read this according to the quaker construction. Repent, and *receive the spirit*, and ye shall receive the gift of the Spirit. Ver. 41. "Then they that gladly received his word *were baptized*; and the same day there were added to them about 3000 souls." A plain narration of facts. Acts 8. 12, 13. "They were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also; and when he was baptized, he continued with Phillip, &c." But surely this Simon soon evinced that he had not received the *spiritual* baptism. And concerning that whole number, it is remarked, ver. 16. "For as yet he, [ie. the Spirit,] was fallen upon none of them; only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." When Ananias went to Saul, he conferred the gift of the holy *spirit first*; and *then*, the narrative proceeds, Acts 9. 18. "Imme-

diately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales ; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was *baptized.*" Many other passages must be omitted, such as Acts 16. 15, 33, and 18. 8, and 1 Cor. 1. 13. &c. &c. There are two however so explicit, I cannot omit them. Acts 8. 36. " And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain *water*; and the eunuch said, see, here is *water*; what doth hinder me to be *baptized?*" 38. " And they went down both into the *water*,——and he *baptized* him."—While Peter preached in the house of Cornelius, Acts 10. 44. " The holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word." Then answered Peter, ver. 47. " Can any man forbid *water* that these should not be *baptized*, which *have* received the *Holy Ghost* as well as we ?" Indeed throughout the history of the Apostles' labors, we find they baptized with water those who gave evidence of the new birth, and professed repentance and faith in Christ. And Barclay has no way of avoiding the doctrine of water-baptism, in view of such plain assertions of the sacred writers, only by saying the Apostles were under a *mistake*, or at most, did it of *permission* on account of existing circumstances, and not of *commandment.* (Apology, pp. 436, 437.) But if they were under *mistakes* as to the very nature and meaning of their commission from their Lord, they might mistake on all other subjects. If this be the case, my confidence in their divine authority is gone, and I am thrown upon the restless ocean of uncertainty, till R. B. or some other prophet of these latter days, shall produce evidence of *superior* claims to inspiration and infallibility. But I am satisfied they did *not* mistake ; but delivered to us the commands of Christ, as they received them from the Head of the Church. The above quotations are sufficient to show that the Apostles understood and practiced *water baptism*, as the command of their Lord given in the same day he was taken up from them. And *their* practice is worth 1000 spiritual constructions, which would explain it of the baptism of the Holy Spirit alone. We readily agree there is but " one effectual or saving baptism— and that water does not " wash away the filthiness of the

flesh," or unholy nature ; but submitting to the ordinance is " the answer of a good conscience toward God."—I must notice one other mistake of *Barclay's*, though I have found none in *the Apostles* on this subject. He says (p. 424.) " the gospel puts an end to carnal ordinances—and quotes Heb. 9. 10. to prove that baptism (washings) is of the number. I have only to request the reader to peruse the passage, and remember that there were " divers washings" in the temple service, which were totally different from the baptism which the Apostles applied to Christian converts.

## SECTION 2.

*Of the Lord's Supper.* Concerning this and baptism together, Clarkson* says, " the rejection of these ceremonies is one of the fundamentals of quakerism." (Portraiture, vol. 2. p. 299.) All the quaker writers I have read agree in this account, and have much to say against a supper of bread and wine. I believe it is an ordinance, which our Lord instituted just before he suffered, to be observed by his followers at suitable times, till he shall come to judge the world. I receive it as a memorial of our Lord's death, and as a token of communion which Christians have with each other, and with the Father and his Son, through the indwelling of the Spirit. Without the Spirit in our hearts, it is null and void ; and cannot convey that precious gift, or produce gracious affections, of itself. So that we may, attending on it with a carnal mind, " eat and drink condemnation." But does the *abuse* of a favour evince that it was *not good* as it came down from the Father of lights ? If so, there is no good gift in all the profusion of his blessings which fill the earth ; for there is no one which has not been perverted to the ruin of body and soul. Or is this ordinance to be wholly despised, as a useless thing, because it is not the *greatest* of all gifts ? If so,

*Clarkson is not in connection with the friends ; but is evidently a quaker in principle ; and they have put his volumes into my hands as authority.

then *bread* is not needful for the body; because man does not live by bread *alone*. Yet this is the reasoning of the Friends in regard to the supper. They say, *Christ* is the bread of life; the communion of the Spirit is the only living and acceptable communion; *therefore* the supper is *useless*. We admit the facts; but deny the conclusion; believing that Christ makes use of *means* in communicating himself to believers, and is often "made known to them in the breaking of bread;" believing that while we are in the body the Spirit himself will use this and other methods to perfect that which concerneth us.

Still it is a question of *fact; has* Christ *enjoined* the supper as an ordinance; or not? It is true, he blotted out the hand-writing of *former* ordinances; but that cirumstance no more proves he instituted no new ones, than the repeal of a law of the state proves the legislature have enacted no other. He made an end of *Jewish* rites; but (1 Cor. 11. 23—26) "the same night in which he was betrayed, he took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." This account accords with that given separately by three Evangelists, (Matt. 26th, Mark 14th, and Luke 22d,) so nearly in these words of Paul, and so perfectly in agreement with each other, that I need not quote them. In each of these four instances, we find a plain narrative of facts, with no appearance of a mystical sense; in language that is not even figurative, except the expressions, "This is my body, this is my blood"—which would be easily understood thus, 'this bread represents my body—this cup, or wine, represents my blood'; and Paul calls them the bread and the cup still. On these combined testimonies we remark; The institution is made by our Lord himself, at the very *close* of the old dispensation, having

a prospective reference to the new ; that it was again "received of the Lord Jesus," by Paul, and by him "delivered" to the churches, especially of the Gentiles, long after the ascension ; and that it is given as a *command* "This *do*." We find the *design* of it—"this do in *remembrance of me*"—to "show the Lord's death"—"is it not the communion of the body of Christ ?" "for we are all partakers of that one bread." We find *how long it is to continue* ; he has once come, and the heaven has received him, till he shall come to judge the world. Barclay and the others have told us this means "till he shall come in their hearts by his spirit." To which construction I have three objections. It is a *mystical sense*, in the language of plain narration. It is *a solecism*—have communion with Christ in your hearts, till he come in your hearts. It *implies that the spirit was not yet given*, when Paul wrote to the Corinthians ; but he *was* given long before. Thus far concerning the command of Christ. We will now inquire whether the Apostles and churches *practised* accordingly. Acts 2. 42. The 3000 who were baptized "continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and *in breaking of bread*, and in prayers" Acts 20. 7. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples *came together to break bread*, Paul preached unto them." 1 Cor. 10. 16, 21. "*The cup* of blessing which *we bless*, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ ? *The bread* which *we break*, is it not the communion of the body of Christ ?" Thus he alludes to a practice well known to the Corinthians ; and in the same Chapter he censures them for *abuses* of the practice, which had crept in ; which evidently implies the previous practice. Nor does he require them to *abolish* the practice, but only *reform* it ; and even *confirms* at the same time the divine appointment, as we have seen above. The practice therefore will doubtless continue, till the last generation of believers shall be translated to that state, where *all* ordinances will be useless, and they will sit down at the marriage-supper of the Lamb.

## SECTION 3.

*Of the Holy Sabbath, or Lord's day.*—On *this* subject also, Fr. C. has saved me the trouble of *proving* my assertion; but has excited me to vindicate a divine command.

The Friends adopt a principle in relation to this and the two preceding subjects, which is often adopted by others; and has a very extensive and pernicious influence on their constructon of the scriptures. It is this general sweeping principle, 'That Christ *abolished all ordinances and ceremonies* which had been divinely appointed before he came. Some carry the idea so far as to reject most or all of the *old testament scriptures*, while they receive those of the new. I verily believe a hundred pages on this one point might be a good work for some writer, and profitable to many readers. But I must be brief; and shall do little more than *state the fact*, as it appears to me, requesting the reader to keep it in view *while perusing the new testament;* not doubting but he will be convinced it is the true one, and that he can consistently adopt no other Christ abolished the *Jewish ordinances and ceremonies*, given to that people by the hand of *Moses;* but proceeded no farther by way of abolishing, repealing, or taking out of the way, what had before been instituted or commanded. He did *not* abolish the *prophecies and sacred histories*, for that would have been to prove them false. He did *not* abolish the *moral precepts and devotional writings;* for the moral duties, and the exercises of the pious heart are substantially the same in all ages. He did *not* alter the *essential character of his real church;* but in every period requires faith, repentance, love, and new obedience, from all his accepted people. He did *not* abolish the *covenant made with Abraham and his believing seed;* for the Apostle expressly distinguishes this from the ceremonial law which Christ *did* abolish; saying, Gal. 3. 17. "the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was 430 years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." And reasons at large on the perpetuity of that covenant, and its blessings

coming on the Gentiles.* Again, Christ did *not* abolish the *moral law* or the *ten commands*. This is totally *distinct* from the ceremonial law; and is often so distinguished in the new testament. These commands were all *known before* they were given to Moses on the tables of stone; but God saw fit then to give them all forth together, in an awful manner, to that people; yet they, at the time, made *no part of that code of ceremonies*, which Christ afterward *abolished*. Indeed, on the very face of *this* law, we find requirements and prohibitions so consonant with the perfections of God, and with our relations to Him and each other, that we see he *could* not repeal them without denying himself, and relinquishing his moral government of the world. *Christ could* not abolish this law without taking the part of transgressors against his Father. Accordingly, he assures us he "came not to destroy, but to fulfil it;" and that "till heaven and earth pass, one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." The Apostle is very clear and abundant in his argument on the subject. "Do we then *make void* the law through faith? God forbid. Yea, we *establish* the law." Christ *explained* this law, which was not understood, and had been corrupted by the doctors, or teachers. He showed that it is "*exceeding broad*, extending to every thought;" Whereas it had been considered by many as reaching only external conduct. He cleared away from it the traditions of the Rabbins. He *obeyed* it perfectly through all his life; and *suffered its penalty, or endured its curse* in his death. But he *never* gave the least intimation that he intended to *repeal* it, or any part of it. Now the command to observe the *Sabbath* is *found in the moral law;* among those commands which are of *perpetual and universal obligation, not one of which he ever repealed.* It is true, it was enjoined at the creation, and so doubtless were

* This is a conclusive argument for the consecration to God of the children of believers. This covenant included them, and Christ did not abolish it. We *need* no new institution, while the former remains in force.

all the other nine. But God saw fit to *renew* it at Sinai. It is true the sabbath is often *named* in the *ceremonial* law, and among those *judicial* regulations which God, as their *civil Legislator*, gave the Jews. In this case, appropriate penalties were annexed for open violations; even as Christian rulers enact similar laws respecting it, though they still regard it in a much higher sense as an institution of God. Still it is found in the *moral law;* and, if God still forbid us to have any other gods before him; to worship any graven image; to take his name in vain; to be disobedient to parents; to kill; to commit adultery; to steal; to bear false witness; and to covet our neighbor's possessions; then he *still* requires us to "*remember the sabbath-day, to keep it holy.*"

Paul styles the moral law, *the* law, by way of *eminence or distinction.* We have shown that Christ did not release us from obligation to obey it; though he released believers from its condemnation. Now, every law in human governments, is in full force, until it expire by its own limitations: or the government itself cease; or it be repealed by the same authority which enacted it. So are the laws of Jehovah. No one will take either of the two first methods to abolish the Sabbath. I think no one but a mystical reader of scripture will now say it is *repealed.* If then, we had nothing in the new testament to *confirm* the institution, we should still be bound to observe the day of rest. But we have *much* to confirm it. Concerning this fourth command in particular our Lord often spake, and was often questioned. And what did he teach? He taught that the traditions of the scribes were nugatory; that a *superstitious* and *self-righteous* regard to the day was not what God required, but hated; that actions of necessity and mercy were consistent with the command; and that he, the Lord of the Sabbath, as he was of the universe, had a right to work, or do good, on his own day; but at no time did he disannul the command, or say one word to weaken the obligation to observe it as holy to the Lord. Whenever the Apostle censures believers for observing "days, and

months, and times, and years," it is manifest he is warning them against subjecting themselves to the ceremonies which were strictly *Jewish*. He once uses the word *sabbath-days* in such a connection, Col. 2. 16. To understand this it is only necessary to observe that *other* holy days, (or days set apart,) had been called *sabbaths;* (i. e. days of *rest* from secular engagements;) as you may see in Lev. 23. 32. where the *day of atonement* is termed a sabbath; in Lev. 25. where the *year of jubilee* is so called; and in several other places.

Our Lord's uniform *practice confirmed* the sabbath; and it was *observed by the Apostles and brethren* in the primitive churches. Some of the passages which prove this will also show, that when the Lord of creation and Author of redemption rose from the dead on the *first* day of the weak, *that* day was *substituted for the seventh*, in perfect agreement with the fourth command, which only requires a seventh part of time. John 20. 19, 26. "Then the same day (of the resurrection) at evening, being the first day of the week, when —— the disciples were assembled, —— came Jesus, and stood in the midst, and said unto them, Peace be unto you. And, after eight days, (or the 8th day,) again his disciples were within ——. *Then* came Jesus." Acts 20. 7. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them." 1 Cor. 16. 1, 2. "Now concerning the collection for the saints —— Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him." These only prove that they were accustomed *to assemble* on the first day of the week for religious worship, communion, &c. That this was their *sabbath*, we infer from the fact already established, that the Sabbath was not abolished, and they were bound to observe it. With me the *practice* of the Apostles is authority in things of this nature. There is one more passage very explicit. Rev. 1. 10. "I was in the spirit on *the Lord's day*," says John, after churches had been established and his Lord in heaven for more than thirty years. What day could this be,

but the sabbath? *all* days are the Lord's; but *the sabbath more peculiarly so.* John meant to *distinguish* some one day above others, by using that term; and that distinction must have been *known* to his readers, or it would have been useless for him to say "the Lord's day," without explaining. It is evident from this passage the Sabbath, or Lord's day, was generally known and regarded in the churches at that time. And if the Lord had a day appropriated for his worship *then*, when his revelations to men closed, it cannot be questioned but he has also at *this* time.

The man who gathered sticks (without necessity, wantonly, and in contempt of the law of God,) was stoned to death by *judicial* sentence. Perhaps at that very time the same act, as a matter of *necessity*, would have been overlooked. From the verses preceding the account (Num. 15. 27—36) it is plain the instance was recorded to illustrate a law for punishing *presumptuous* offenders. We have remarked, the command to observe the sabbath was often repeated in the *national* laws, and ceremonial. So Exod. 35. 2, 3, it is repeated, and *this* prohibition added, "Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath-day." This is in connection with orders for building the tabernacle. That people of slow understanding might suppose that such a holy work might be attended to on the sabbath. Fire was necessary for various parts of the work. But they were forbidden so much as to kindle a fire, *to be used in that work.* If this conjecture be correct, then the regulation was special and temporary. The modern Jews deem it universal and perpetual, and will not light a candle on their sabbath. But this is no evidence that such was the intention of Jehovah; for they have very erroneous views of their own law, and many superstitious deviations from it.

It is rather curious that the Friends reject the divine institution of the Christian sabbath; and yet "are moved" to the same thing by their own good sense. They "cannot be so superstitious" as to receive it as a command from God;

" but (says Barclay, pp. 349, 350,) first, for as much as it is *necessary* that there be *some time set apart*, for the saints to wait upon God ; and that secondly, it is *fit* at some times they be *freed from their other outward affairs ;* and thirdly, reason and equity doth allow that servants and beasts have *some time allowed them* to be eased from their continual labor ; and that fourthly it appears that *the apostles and primitive Christians did use the first day of the week* for these purposes, we find ourselves sufficiently moved for these causes to do so also." These are certainly very good and sufficient reasons for the observance of the day. And why might they not have weight *in the divine mind* for the *appointment* of the day ? God watches over the interests of his church with tender care, and adapts his institutions to our situation and necessities. It appears to me that this advocate for the equality of all days has, (" though he meant not so,") argued well in favor of the sabbath. Why are not men as willing to be " moved" by the commands of God, as by their own reason, or their own hearts ? May we not be even superstitiously afraid of superstition ? and will not men feel a greater obligation to observe an institution of God, than a merely *human* recommendation ? I still believe that on the " due observance" of this day " depends under God, the continuance of religion in the world." God *could* carry on the work of redemption without *any* means : but he always uses them ; the preaching of the gospel, the reading of the scriptures, christian conversation, meditation, &c. These *may* be attended on *any* day, and *will* be often regarded by real Christians.—But the best Christians feel most sensibly their need of laying their worldly concerns entirely aside, and devoting a *portion* of their time to this *special* business. That portion, as a matter of propriety, and by divine appointment, is eminently, though not exclusively, one day in seven. If this day should be lost among the other days, the other means would be gradually neglected ; present Christians would soon leave the world ; few sinners would be converted to God ; the light

of truth would be soon extinguished ; and *this* nation would revert to a state of heathenism. But, though many may stumble, and fall, and perish ; the Lord will preserve his sacred day, and bless his appointed means, 'till the sabbath of the world shall come.

When we insist on the supper and baptism as new institutions, and the sabbath as confirmed by Christ ; the Friends urge that there is the same authority for *washing each other's feet ;* for *elders' anointing the sick with oil ; and* for *abstaining from things strangled and from blood.* I reply : The *first* was not enjoined as an *ordinance*, but given as an *example* of humility, condescension, and kindness. This is manifest from the *practice* of the Apostles. They doubtless understood the meaning ; and if it were *intended* for an ordinance, they would have observed it. But we find not the least trace of such a practice in all the scriptural records of the church.—As for the *second*, it was enjoined only while the elders had *miraculous* powers : as these shortly ceased, the practice could not with propriety be retained. Therefore, to anoint the sick with oil, and expect a miraculous cure, would be an act as preposterous in the elders of our day, as to attempt to raise the dead ; though their prayer of faith often saves the sick. The *third* was a *special* direction at the time, avowedly for the purpose of conciliating believing Jews and Gentiles, united in the same churches ; but differing in their views in regard to the formal Jewish rites. It is by no means applicable to *us*, of any denomination, as we are all "sinners of the Gentiles."

There are *other* objections of the Quakers against these institutions, which might be noticed ; especially their interpretation of many passages of scripture. But I have not time for it. I chose rather to show the *improper methods* they take to expound scripture ; and in the light of these remarks cheerfully leave the matter to the reader to determine for himself ; only adding that if these are institutions and commands of God, they cannot be neglected or defiled without guilt and danger.

## CHAP. IV.

OF MY STATEMENTS WHICH FRIEND COBB *denies.*

There are *three* statements in my Sermons which Fr. C. calls in question. They regard human *Depravity*, the *Incarnation* of Christ, and his *Atonement*. I had said, more or less explicitly, that the Friends do not believe these doctrines. He asserts that they believe them all.—I shall, in this Chapter consider them separately.

### SECTION I.

Of *Depravity*. I had read his extract from Barclay, before I preached. Yet I made the assertion above named; nor can I recal it, after a thorough perusal of all the Authors that lie before me.—No disputed question can ever be determined, without a clear understanding of the point in debate. I will therefore state what I understand by total human depravity; and what I believe all correct writers, usually mean by it. By depravity I mean that mankind have no holy love of God in them; that *all* mankind, at the *present time*, from their birth till their death, are totally alienated from God, except penitent and believing souls, who are renewed by grace. I suppose Fr. C. will at once say, (when he reads this, and knows what is *meant* by depravity,) that neither he, or any other Friend, believes it. However that shall be, I expect soon to make it evident that he and they *mean* by the doctrine a very different thing. They mean, as nearly as I can *ascertain*, that mankind *became* corrupt by the fall of Adam, but *are now* even *all* of them, *restored;* so that *all men have* a holy principle of love to God *in* them. They say indeed that this goodness is not in man, as *of himself*, but is the seed of *God*, and the *gift of God*. But it is, by their account, *in* man, in *all* men; and if cherished, produces all the grades of holiness till the soul arrives to perfection. In short, they describe *all* men precisely as I should describe *Christians*; as having an unholy nature, which of itself produces nothing

truly good or holy; and *also* as having a *holy* principle implanted in them, by the grace of God. *I* believe that man is *still* depraved. They believe he *has* been depraved, but is now *restored*, so far as to have the seed of God in him. Surely the two ideas are totally *distinct* and *opposite*. They are careful to shew us, that by this seed of God, they mean real holy love, and not *conscience*, a *moral sense*, or *natural goodness*. They mean something *acceptable* in the sight of God, and a *portion* at least of *his own holy moral image*. They have an *appearance* of admitting depravity, because they ascribe this goodness in man, not to his nature, but to God. But the question is, What *is* man? If he *has* holiness in him, it makes no difference, as to *this* question, whether it *remained* in him after the fall, or whether it has been *restored* by the grace of God. If it *is in* him, he is not dead in trespasses and sins.

I believe that the *present generation*, *the living world*, *the adult world*, *the aged* part of the world, are this moment divided into two classes; the friends, and the enemies, of God. The one class, *once* enemies, have been *reconciled*; most of them within their own recollection. The other are *still totally* alienated from the love of God, and the life of faith and obedience; and are in such a state that they can never see the kingdom of heaven without being born again.

I neither expect nor desire that my assertions should be received without proof; and shall now proceed to bring it; from quaker writings to show that I have represented their sentiment truly; and from scripture, to show that my doctrine of depravity is correct

I need not repeat Fr. C's. quotation from Barclay, (Observ. pp. 14—17. Apol. pp. 96—99.) I acknowledge it is full to the point which I have said they allow; viz. that man is totally depraved "as he stands in the fall." I allow too there is much more to the same point in Barclay, and several other writers. This I knew before I preached my sermons; but this, we have seen, is not believing *depravity*, *if*, at the

same time, they believe that mankind have the seed of God, or love of God, *restored* to them. That they *do* so believe, I will now prove.

I shall first bring a sentence in Fr. Cobb's own extract, referred to above. Page 15. "For whatever good a man doeth, it proceedeth not from his nature, as he is man, or the son of Adam; but from the *seed of God in him, as a new visitation of life*, in order *to bring him out of* his natural condition; so that though it be in him, it is not of him"—This clearly implies that man *doeth* some good thing; and that the *seed of God is in him*, as a new visitation of life to produce it. But it may be said he has reference to *believers* only, and not *all men*. I answer; the proposition from which the extract is taken, is entitled, (p. 94.) "Concerning the condition of man in the fall;" and begins thus, "All Adam's posterity, or mankind, both Jews, and Gentiles, &c." Language cannot be more explicit.

Soon after the above extract, we find Barclay commenting on Rom. 2. 14. (which refers to the *heathen*,) and saying, "This nature must not, neither can be, understood of *man's own nature*, which is corrupt and fallen; but of the *spiritual nature*, which proceedeth from *the seed of God in man*, as it receiveth a *new visitation of God's love*, and *is quickened* by it." (Barclay p 100). Again; "The fulfilling of the law, which is spiritual, holy, and just, cannot be expected from that nature which is corrupt, fallen, and unregenerate. Whence we conclude, with good reason, that the nature here spoken of, by which the Gentiles are said to have done the *things contained in the law*, is not the *common nature of men*; but that *spiritual nature* that ariseth from the works of the righteous and spiritual law that is written in the heart." (p. 101.)

In a long disertation on "Universal and saving light, he says, (pp. 137, 138.)" *By this seed, grace, and word of God, and light wherewith* we say *every man is enlightened*, and hath a measure of it —— *we understand a spiritual, heavenly, and*

*invisible principle, in which God, as Father, Son, and Spirit, dwells ; a measure of which divine and glorious life* is *in all men* as a *seed*, which of its own nature draws, invites, and *inclines* to God ; and this some call—*the spiritual body of Christ, the flesh and blood of Christ, which came down from heaven*, of which all the saints do feed, and are thereby nourished unto eternal life.—This is that *Christ within*, which we are heard so much to speak and declare of." Again, (p. 143)in answering the inquiry, how Christ is in all men ? he is not in all *as he is in the saints* ; yet "*Christ is in all men* as in a *seed*, yea, and that he *never is nor can be separate* from that *holy, pure seed and light* which is *in all men ;* therefore may it be said in a larger sense that he is *in all*, even as we observed before." "We know it to be a *substance*, because it subsists *in* the heart of wicked men, even while they are in their wickedness." (p. 160.) Again, (pp. 144,) he says, "We make it a distinct separate thing from man's soul, and all the faculties of it." He then shows how it differs from *reason*, as I have asserted above. I have also said, they distinguish it from *conscience* ; "We do further rightly distinguish this from man's natural *conscience* ; for conscience—may be defiled and corrupted ; Tit. 1. 15. but this light can never be corrupted nor defiled."

To the same sentiment bear all their prophets witness, whom I have had opportunity to consult, viz. Tuke, Kersey, Clarkson, and Barclay again in his Catechism. I shall quote no more than the following sentence from Clarkson, (vol. 2. p. 101.) "As God then poured into Adam, the first man (at his creation,) a certain portion of his own Spirit, or gave him a certain portion of the divine light, for the regulation of his spiritual conduct, and *the power of heavenly intercourse with himself*,so he *did not entirely cease from bestowing his Spirit upon his posterity.*" No one will now say that the Friends believe the hearts of men to be *wholly evil, or unholy* : but all will grant they entertain the notion, that there is some moral goodness in *all* men, of every age and nation ; not only in

the righteous or renewed, but the wicked also, "even while they are in their wickedness." A most consoling doctrine to those who wish to *remain* in their wickedness, and yet not be in danger.

I would now gladly prove at large that men *are* universally depraved; an humiliating doctrine, but necessary to be known. But my limits will allow only a brief attempt. I must here again object to several artful, but improper methods the Friends use, of making scripture favour their views. The first I shall notice is the habit *of giving a mystical sense* to those numerous passages which ascribe perfect sinfulness to men. Where a common reader would conceive of nothing but an application to men *as they are, living* men, considered simply in their true character before God; a quaker will find only an allusion to mankind *as they were—as they stand in the fall*—as to their own corrupt nature, *considered separate* from the seed and life of Christ in them. Believing the scriptures are given for our instruction, I cannot think any such abstruse and far-fetched meaning is couched under plain, direct and positive terms. I must therefore take leave to call back from their mystical application to an indefinite and indefinable subject, the following passages; which the reader may see perverted as above in the extract from Barclay (pp. 14—17. of the Observ.) Gen. 6 5. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." And Gen. 8. 21. "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." Who but a mystic would imagine that this was spoken of man's heart "as it stood in the fall," *when*, at the same time, in consequence of the seed or life restored within him, he had *many* thoughts and imaginations, which were *not* evil, and which *could* be "neither defiled nor corrupted" ?—There is an extract from the 14th Psalm, applied in the same way. "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone

aside, they are all together become filthy ; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." One would suppose the Psalmist here describes what God *saw*, precisely as men *were* ; *not* what he saw they *would have been*, if his grace had not restored them from corruption to purity, and from sin to holiness. Barclay then proceeds to quote a farther most moving account of the wickedness of man, from Rom. 3. 10. &c. ; still applying it to *an abstract notion* of a sinful *nature*, while *men's actual state* is in his view far different. I ask the reader to observe what *additions* to the word of God are necessary to make it bear Barclay's sense. " Their throat *would have been* an open sepulchre ; with their tongues they *would have used* deceit ; the poison of asps *would have been* under their lips ;" *if they had been left as they stood in the fall.* " Their mouths *are* (in some sense) full of cursing and bitterness, and their feet swift to shed blood," as descended from Adam ; but, as having *Christ* in them, they abhor all such iniquities.

Restoring these three passages (given by inspiration of God) to their evident meaning, we have in them *alone* the fullest evidence of human depravity. They were given us at three very distant periods of the world—before the flood—in the time of David—and after the ascension of our Lord, and commencement of the gospel dispensation. They describe man as an enemy to God in his mind, and by wicked works. Another method of applying scripture is worthy of particular notice. They apply *to men indiscriminately*, what is addressed to *Christians only* ; who *have* been born of the Spirit ; who *have* put off the old man, and put on the new ; and who *are* essentially *different* from the residue of the world, and from their former selves. This is especially the case in regard to the *epistles*, which are mostly addressed to *Churches of professed believers ;* and many of whom were real believers. But if they were " chosen, and called *out* of the world," and had become " new creatures ;" then they were before of the same character with the world ; and they who were uncon-

verted were still dead in trespasses and sins. Such men as Barclay and Tuke, not to say common readers, ought to have known this distinction,—and to have observed it in their writings. Then would they have applied the promises, &c. only to the children of the promise; and not to the impenitent and unbelieving, who have not the love of God in them. It is in this way he makes out all men, even Mahometans and Pagans, to be *Christians*. That the Quaker writers *do* make this misapplication of scripture, any one who reads them may notice for himself, in many instances. I will give two of them. 1 Cor. 12. 7. is quoted by Barclay (and from him by Cobb) to prove that *all men* have the Spirit. The words were, "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." Only look at the connection, and you find the Apostle has reference only to the different "*gifts*" bestowed on *teachers* for the edification of the church. He quotes 1 Cor. 3. 16. as applying to *all*; but the Apostle was writing to *believers*, and addresses them as *Christians*; "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" By such methods of applying scripture, any thing we choose may be proved from the bible. But who does not know that the sacred writers describe a part of mankind as renewed men, as a peculiar people —imperfect indeed in this life, their spirit warring against the flesh, and the flesh against the spirit —— but so far *distinct from the rest of the world*, that they are children of God; and all others enemies of God, and children of disobedience? Now I bring all those parts of scripture which *describe this people*, and *point out this distinction*, to prove human depravity. *They* were once dead in sin; for the change they have undergone is a new creation. *All others are still* in the congregation of the dead; for imperfect as Christians are, their Lord could say, "*Ye* are not of the world: *the world* cannot receive the Spirit of truth, because it seeth him not; neither knoweth him: but *ye* know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

Again, the Friends *make no distinction* between *light* and *love ;* or, between a *knowledge* of duty, and a real *disposition* of heart to *perform* it. In consequence of this confusion of ideas ; they gain strength to their principle of the seed restored from many passages, which rightly understood avail them nothing. God has given, and the scriptures every where represent him as having given, sufficient knowledge of his will, to leave those who disobey forever without excuse ; and sufficient to insure obedience, if men's hearts had not been at enmity with God. The Friends call this *light* the same as a good *disposition* ; and thus easily prove that all men are partly holy. That they *do* reason as I have now stated is evident from the quotations I have already made. To those I shall add one instance more. Barclay says (p. 166.) " That this saving *light and seed*, or a measure of it, is given to all, Christ tells us expressly in the parable of the sower. He saith that this seed sown in those several sorts of grounds is the *word of the kingdom*, which the Apostle calls the *implanted, ingrafted word*, which is *able to save the soul.*" That the word preached is able to save the soul, *when it is* implanted by the holy Spirit, as it *is* in believers, will not be doubted. But I do not find that the Apostle ascribes this saving power to the word in the hearts of any *besides* believers. Our Lord, in the parable, does not call it either *implanted*, or *ingrafted*, in either of the four cases he describes ; nor can we lawfully make out such a *sense* from his words, except in the case of those who are represented by the " seed sown in good ground." In the most hopeful of the other cases he expressly affirms, " they had *no root* in themselves." Often do they call this internal Spirit, the *light*—but very frequently also, the *seed, the word of God, the Spirit of life, the new man, Christ* in us. The *scriptures* bear them out in saying every man has *light or knowledge ;* i. e. has reason, understanding, and conscience : that all may see the eternal power and Godhead in the things that are made : and that all who hear the gospel, or read the bible, have meridian light. But the scriptures do not describe *ho-*

*less* to all men since the fall ; either *remaining* after that fatal transaction, or *restored* by grace. Therefore all the proof of their doctrine which they obtain in this way is to no purpose, unless they can prove that wicked men and devils have no light or knowledge :—and also that the goodness of holy angels and pious men *consists* in their *knowledge*, and *not* in their *love* and other holy dispositions of heart.

Again, they wrest many passages of scripture in consequence of *reasoning incorrectly respecting divine mercy and grace.* Because God is good to all ; willeth not the death of a sinner ; is willing all men should be saved ; and gave his Son a ransom for all ; therefore, (they infer,) he has given all a portion of his Spirit, which is in them a seed of life. It is not so easy to see how this inference follows. But once take it for granted that giving his spirit is the *only way* in which God can *show* mercy, and all is plain. Once believe, that all the riches of his grace in your daily life are nothing; that the gift of his Son upon the cross to suffer in your stead, was not an act of pity ; that the invitations of the gospel to all to come to him and live, mean nothing, are only a dead letter ; that the awakening and convincing operations of the spirit, in conjunction with the gospel, are useless ; then may you easily prove that there *is no* fruit of the mercy of God to us, unless he has put within us the seed of grace. But surely *all* the innumerable gifts of his providence and grace are not the less good and perfect, though they descend upon the evil and unthankful. *Their* principle is that *that* only is grace or kindness which makes our *hearts* better, even pure and holy in part. The *truth* is, that God is good, and our lives are *filled* with his goodness to body and soul, though we have *no* disposition, without his *special* grace, to obey his word, or render to the Lord according to his benefits.

On such perversions of scripture the quaker doctrine of *human nature restored or renewed* is built. Let us see in a few words where the doctrine of human *depravity* stands. I come directly to the point. Rom. 8. 6—9. "For to be carnally

minded is death; but to be spiritually-minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, *if so be* that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Does not the Apostle in this passage and the context clearly speak of *two classes* of men, as opposite to each other as light and darkness? Opposite in their *feelings or hearts*; in their *walk or life*; in their *acceptance* with God; and in their *final destiny*? And what account does he give of the one class? Are they possessed of *some good*, and *some bad*, principles or affections? They have a carnal mind *at enmity* with God, *are* not, and *cannot* be *subject* to his law; *cannot please* God; *have not the spirit* of Christ; are *none of his*; live *after the flesh*; and die, or *perish forever*. Now no one will say that he means here (by natural or carnal men) *reprobates* alone, one of a thousand. Is he then describing human nature "as it stands in the fall;" a mere abstract nothing; or is he describing human nature *as it is?* The *other* class were *once* in the same state. With this account of the Apostle agrees the whole tenor of scripture. I am willing to rest the doctrine on those explicit passages, which have just been mentioned, as having been perverted by the Quakers. And shall only add further, that there can be no need of passing from death to life, if it is done already; but Christ assures us, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God:" that there is no propriety in saying, "Be ye reconciled to God," to those who *are* reconciled already; and yet this is the gospel message to *all the impenitent sons of men*.

The *practical effects* of a disbelief of this doctrine, and the belief of an inherent holy principle, are, that men *trust* in their own supposed goodness of heart, with a cultivation of their seed within them; and feel no need of praying, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Whereas they who really *believe* that they are depraved, will begin to inquire how *sinners* can be saved.

## SECTION 2.

*Of the* Incarnation *of Christ.*—On this subject my Sermons contained the following assertions ; " Some of their leaders formerly denied that Jesus Christ ever came in the flesh, as man ; thus *denying the Lord that bought them.* Many still retain this sentiment. Some *admit* the incarnation. But *generally* the *atonement* is overlooked, and all they say of Christ, is, of his operations as a Spirit on the human mind." Let it be here remarked, that I spoke of the *incarnation* in close connection with the *atonement ;* from which it was plain I intended *such* an incarnation as prepared Christ to offer himself an actual sacrifice for us, and not such an incarnation as will soon be described. Let it be recollected also, that my assertion respecting their disbelief of the incarnation was *restricted or limited* to *a part* only of the Friends, and to a *smaller number at the present* day than formerly. To this extent I believe the assertion is true.

In support of the remarks, I shall briefly refer to some more ancient authorities than I have done on other subjects. The first rise of the sect was marked with much wildness and extravagance ; and with the explicit avowal of sentiments which, if they are still embraced, are now more cautiously stated. Their zeal has abated ; their sober judgment has resumed its place in a degree ; their intercourse with more enlightened Christians has probably had influence in producing a more scriptural and rational creed, expunging at least some of the most palpable errors of the first they adopted. On this account I have forborne to revive the sentiments and practices of Fox and others ; although I might probably have been justified in doing it, since the Friends in this vicinity themselves refer to him as authority even *superior* to later writers, and one of their authors in England has recently done the same before the public. There can therefore be no objection to my referring to them on *this* subject, which looks back to that period.

Mr. Cotton Mather, 1691, remarked, " They begin to

speak somewhat more warily in their later catechisms ;" but his work, Quakerism displayed, furnishes me with the following evidence on the subject before us. He quotes a quaker author in his time, who reproaches other professors for believing in an "*imagined God beyond the stars.*" [A denial of the *Deity* of Christ; or, more probably, of his *personal and bodily* existence at the right hand of the Father.] He quotes another as saying, "*your carnal Christ is utterly denied by the light.*" He quotes from *Fox;* "He is *deceived*, who saith, *God is distinct from the Saints* ;" and from Whitehead, "They are like to be *deceived*, who are expecting that Christ's second coming will be *personal* ;- and from their *primer*, "*False* teachers preach Christ *without*, and *bad* people believe in him as he is in heaven above." Some writers out of the quaker society had used the following expressions: "The Lord Jesus Christ is afar off in his bodily presence ;—Christ is without the saints in respect to his bodily presence ; Christ is distinct from every one of us ;—There is not any heaven *within*, into which Christ is ascended ;" but Mather quotes *Fox* as *objecting* to each of them ; from which it is plain *he* held the *opposite* sentiments. Mather also quotes "the famous quaker Pennington," as saying, "We can never call the bodily garment, Christ, but that which appeared and dwelt *in* the body." [But the Son, or Word, is not called Christ in scripture, except when his humanity is included.] Pennington proceeds ; "That which he took on him was our garment, even the flesh and blood of our nature ; which was of an earthly perishing nature ; but he is of an heavenly nature ; and *his flesh, and blood, and bones*, are of his nature." From which Mather draws this conclusion, (and it seems necessarily to follow ;) "You must imagine it was this more spiritual body, which was crucified in that more gross bodily garment which was derived from the Virgin Mary ; and you must imagine that body to be in *every body*, as in a garment, crucified over again ; thus the whole story of the gospel is acted over again every day, as literally as

ever it was at Jerusalem of old. It is all transacted by unaccountable dispensations within ourselves, and Christ is in every quaker, as properly as he was in that garment of a man which was hanged upon the tree." He farther quotes the quaker *catechism* in these words, "We believe that Christ doth offer up himself a living sacrifice *in* us, by which the wrath of God is appeased to us." He also assures us, on his own authority, referring to events which occurred a few years before, "the quakers would *ordinarily* say to our people, we deny thy Christ;—we deny thy God which thou callest Father, Son, and Spirit; thy bible is the word of the devil &c."

To these extracts from Mather might be added many more concerning their former tenets. I will adduce only one, and that from an English religious magazine, the Christian Observer. The conductors are men of great erudition, enlightened and liberal views, and genuine Christian candor. They have more than once complained that quaker writers, more especially of late, are not explicit and definite in their statements; that they use language which *admits* a construction in *favor* of the truth, and may equally as well be construed into a *denial* of the truth; or at least language which agrees with scripture history, but consists also with an allegorical construction, which explains away its meaning. These editors have the following remarks, referring to their earlier tenets; "Such were their extravagances, grafted on their fundamental tenet with regard to the light of Christ within, that some, in their zeal for the hidden Christ, *denied the outward Christ*; gravely contending that the gospels are a mere allegorical history of Christ in the mind; and that his miracles &c. are the symbolic narration of the progress of the divine light within. *Nor were such opinions confined to one or two. They formed the subject of a grave petition to parliament at home, and agitated the Quakers of the new world.*" Thus far in relation to their belief on this subject *formerly*.

I am afraid I had little occasion to say they have very

much improved on this doctrine in modern times. They avow the belief that Christ came in the flesh; they recognize the scriptural history of that event in their standard works; there is not perhaps a single individual who will in words deny it. But what do they *understand*, and what do they *mean* by it? I must make the same complaint others have, of the ambiguity of their language. But after much attention, I am satisfied that nothing can be gathered more than this, That Christ or the Spirit dwelt in the man *Jesus*, as he did in the *Prophets*, and as he does in *themselves;* and that there is *no difference* in the two cases, *except* that *they* have the Spirit in a smaller *degree;* but the man *Jesus, without measure; and*, that the Spirit dwelt in *him*, as an *example* to them, or as *an allegorical representation* of what he was to do in them. Clarkson states, at too much length to be fully quoted, but in substance as follows: God bestowed upon Adam, Noah, Abraham &c. "a portion of his Spirit; or in other words, he gave them a portion of that light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world. At length, in the fulness of time, this divine Spirit, this divine Word, or light, took flesh and inhabited the body of the person Jesus; but with *this difference*, that whereas only a *portion* had been given to Adam &c. it was given *without limit or measure* to the man Jesus.—After Jesus Christ came the Evangelists and Apostles. Of the same Spirit which he had possessed *immeasurably*, these had their several portions, &c." Afterward, he argues at length, like Barclay and the rest, to prove that the same Spirit dwells in men even *till now*; and in *all* men. In summing up *the whole*, and showing for what *purpose* or *object* the Spirit dwelt *in Jesus*, or in *other men*, he assigns *precisely the same office* to the Spirit in both cases. (Vol. 2. p. 172.) "I have now stated it to be the belief of the Quakers, that the Spirit of God acts *as an inward redeemer to man*. Thus by the promise given to Adam, there was to be perpetual enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman, though the latter was to vanquish; *or*,

as the Quakers interpret it, between the *spirit of sin and the Spirit of God*, that was placed in man. *This promise* was *fully* accomplished by Jesus ; but the Quakers believe it to have been *partially accomplished by many from the time of Adam.*"

In another chapter Clarkson allows (what had been objected,) that the Quakers " make little of Christ, and every thing of the Spirit ;" and attempts to shew there *is* no distinction. But to an attentive reader of scripture I need not prove that the Son and Spirit are as distinct, as the Father and the Son; that the office of the Son was to tabernacle in the flesh, and die for our offences—but the office of the Spirit, to reprove of sin and renew the heart ; that Christ it our *Redeemer*—but the Spirit our *Sanctifier* ; that Christ is our *Intercessor*—but the holy Spirit our *Comforter*.—By making no distinction, or rather, by almost losing sight of Christ, to " make every thing of the Spirit," the Quakers make out, what other Christians will hardly admit, that the Spirit was " crucified for us."

The preceding extracts from Clarkson deserve a few remarks. 1. They entirely coincide with what will soon be quoted and stated in relation to the *Atonement*; or rather prove that atonement has no place in the quaker system. 2. They fully substantiate what Mather and many others have said, that the quakers believe *God is incarnate in them*, in the same sense he was in " the man Jesus," excepting only *in measure*. 3. The extracts bear on the subject before us, and shew that (if Clarkson be correct,) the Friends do not in the true sense believe in the Incarnation of Christ. The true doctrine is, that the *Word and not the Spirit*, " was made flesh, and dwelt among us :" and that, in the case of *Christ*, God was manifest in the flesh in a sense he never was in Abraham or any other man, not only in *measure* or *degree*, but as to the *object*, *purpose*, *manner*, *effects*, and in every conceivable sense. 4. The extracts give an idea of *inward redemption* by the Spirit " in the man Jesus," (as a *speci-*

*men* of the same work in believers) which is totally at war with fact. Clarkson states this as the *principal* if not only object of the Spirit's dwelling in Jesus; and shews at some length that *in him* the Spirit bruised the serpent's head; "possessing or occupying his body, which was weak and infirm, and subject to passions; so that sin could never enter, but was entirely repelled." But is this inward redemption? Even the Friends have acknowledged *sin* in men; but Christ "had no sin." Here is a combat without an enemy; a redemption, where there was never any bondage; a raising to life that which was never dead. Surely Christ had no lusts to be mortified; no corruptions to be slain; no pollutions to be washed away. Into such absurdities do men fall, when they allegorize plain scripture. I believe, and rejoice in the belief, that the holy Spirit dwells in all true *Christians*, to redeem them from all iniquity. But I believe this is a totally different work from any thing that passed in the mind or heart of *Christ*, while he was on earth; and that *he*, in the complex character of God-man, wrought *his* part of redemption *by giving his life a ransom for us.*—The reader must now form his own opinion of the Quaker belief in the Incarnation.

## SECTION 3.

*Of the Atonement of Christ.*—After quoting my assertions concerning the incarnation and atonement, Fr. C. observes, "I hope the author is not so blinded, as to think there is much gospel in these sermons which abound with such mistakes: for I believe he never saw any thing in the writings nor heard any thing in the testimonies of Friends to warrant this assertion." Having replied in regard to the incarnation, I now proceed to the *Atonement*. My assertion was, "generally the atonement is overlooked, and all they say or think of Christ is, of his operations as a Spirit on the human mind." The reader will observe the expression I used. I did not assert that they expressly *deny* the atonement, but

that they *overlook* it. My meaning was, that they do not give it its due importance, nor rest upon it as the groundwork of their salvation. I was aware that they briefly allow the sufferings and death of Christ; and that his death was useful, *in some way*, to the salvation of men. But I did, and do still, believe, that their best writers have given no correct or adequate ideas of the object, or effects, of these sufferings, in the great work of redemption. Fr. C. has quoted *one page* from Barclay, a part of which has relation to the sufferings of Christ. This is, I believe more than half that can be found on the subject in that writer's octavo volume of nearly 600 pages, containing as Kersey says, "a full and ample account of their belief concerning the Christian religion." He mentions it very briefly and incidentally in a few other places; but explains nothing. It is much the same, with all the quaker writers I have read. Fr. C. quotes no more on this subject, except Kersey. The brief extract he has made from him is simply a declaration of their belief in the *historical facts* of the New Testament; but contains no statement about the atonement. Such as it is, it is all I can find in Kersey's Treatise of above 100 pages, "on fundamental Doctrines of the Christian Religion." Clarkson and Tuke are a little more full and explicit on the subject: and *but* a little. Their account shall be considered soon. Whence this brief and indistinct notice of the greatest wonder the world ever saw; of the principal doctrine of divine revelation; a doctrine on which all others depend; without which most of them could not be true or of any avail; and without an understanding of which they have little or no meaning? Why this silence and neglect, if the atonement is not "overlooked"? It was not so with Paul. He said, "I determined not to know *any thing* among you save Jesus Christ, and *him crucified*;" and with him agree all the New Testament writers. The quaker writers certainly, and I presume their speakers, *seem* determined to know little or nothing among us, save Jesus Christ as a *light and seed*

*within.* The sacred writers do not forget that Christ must be *received*, and formed in the heart: but their first and last theme is, the *sufferings* of our Lord Jesus. I must briefly state the doctrine of the atonement. There are many *incidental effects* of the Saviour's death, which can not properly be said to belong to the atonement; (tho' they are ascribed to his death in scripture;) because they are not the *great object* he had in view, in pouring out his soul unto death. Of this kind are the following: his fulfilling "the prophecies that went before concerning him;" his becoming the antitype of the Old Testament types, and thus making an end of them; his breaking down the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles; his setting his people "an example of suffering affliction, and of patience;" and many other collateral effects. But his great object was infinitely superior; and the consequences of his sufferings extremely different from these things. I conceive his object cannot be so well expressed as by these words—"he suffered the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God." The *necessity*, *nature* and *effects* of the atonement will appear from the following observations. God had given to mankind a perfect law; holy and just like himself, and worthy to be the rule for rational creatures forever; which is still binding in our day, and will be to the end of the world. All men who had lived before the time of Christ had, by their depravity and rebellion, transgressed this holy law; all men since have done the same; and all that shall be born till the end of time will follow our example. All the human race therefore laid under the sentence of this law, which had said, the soul that sinneth it shall die. The wrath of God and his righteous curse were gone forth against all flesh. If justice had taken its course, we should all have perished forever; we should have been speechless, and God would have been glorious in holiness, because he had thus judged. But God is love. He delighted not in the destruction of the guilty. Yet, if *he had repealed* his law, he would have exhibited weakness, muta-

bility, and injustice. If he had *not* repealed his law, but had spared and pardoned sinners without an atonement, his justice would have suffered. The wicked would have said, he either connived at sin, or was unable to punish rebels; and even the penitent would not have known *why* they were pardoned. He found a ransom. Immanuel took our place, a voluntary and spotless sacrifice. God laid on him the iniquities of us all. He was made a curse for us.

Thus he magnified the law, and made it honorable. Thus he died for our offences, and declared the righteousness of God. He rose again for our justification, and is ever at the right hand of God for us.—I cannot now quote one in fifty of the passages of holy writ, which give this view of the Atonement. I must leave the statement to the reader, trusting to his recollection, or his future examination of the scriptures, to convince him of its truth.

If however *this* be the atonement, none will any longer doubt, when he has read the following remarks, that the Friends "overlook" it.—I cannot find in *all* their books I have read, *any account* of such a holy law; that God *ever gave* such a law, by Moses, or by any other person; that there is *any* such law in force at the present time; that God has ever required perfect love and obedience of them, or of me, or forbidden us to practice idolatry, profaneness, murder, theft, or any other sin. I cannot find that they have any knowledge or belief of the rebellion and condemnation of the human race, as we have seen in discussing the subject of depravity. There is no notice of the equity, or holiness, or justice of God; and no complaint that his rights had been invaded by sin. Indeed from quaker books alone I never should get an idea that God is possessed of the glorious attribute of justice. Still less should I imagine that his *wrath* had ever been revealed from heaven against any ungodliness or unrighteousness of men. I never should have dreamed of our lying under any curse; or of Christ's redeeming us from the curse of the law. Fr. C. has quoted the substance of what

Barclay and Kersey have said upon the atonement. The reader will agree, (if he peruses those quotations,) that the above ideas are all wanting in them. For further proof of my present assertions, I can produce no quotations; I can only assert, that there is no mention made of any such subjects; except occasionally by way of disapprobation.

Fr. Tuke (with whom Clarkson agrees,) has expressed himself more fully and explicitly on the sufferings of Christ, than the others have. I shall therefore take his remarks as their standard, to shew that the real idea of an atonement is not found among them; though I shall quote a few sentences from Barclay and others.

The most explicit account of their belief concerning a suffering Redeemer are the following:—"Thus, when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, *from those ceremonious observances*, which were designed to be as a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ." Tuke, page 36.—This is doubtless *true*—it is asserted by the Apostles in nearly the same words. But surely it was a *secondary* object in those excruciating agonies of the cross. Tuke once calls it "the propitiary sacrifice," but adds not a word of explanation. In page 39, he comes to the point, and remarks, "The chief objects of the coming of Christ, evidently appear to have been, 1st, by the sacrifice of himself, to make atonement to God for us, and to become the mediator between God and man. 2dly, by the sanctifying operation of the holy Spirit, to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to bring in everlasting righteousness. [This surely was done rather by his *death and resurrection*, than by his "*Spirit*"; seeing the Apostle says "he died for our offences, and rose again for our justification."] And 3dly, by putting an end to the legal dispensation &c." If any true idea of the Atonement is here given, it is under the 1st particular. What he *means* by Christ's making atonement by the sacrifice of himself, is to be found at page 42; "So far as *remission of sins, and a*

*capacity to receive salvation*, are parts of justification, we attribute it to the sacrifice of Christ." Do not suppose, reader, that this remission of sins takes place, *when the sinner repents and believes.* No; he means that it took place *when Christ died.* For he adds; "But when we consider justification *as a state of divine favor and acceptance*, we ascribe it to the sanctifying operations of the Spirit." I had supposed that when a person's sins are remitted, he is in a state of divine favor and acceptance. But this writer supposes, (if his words have *any* meaning,) that all our sins were remitted by the death of Christ, and we all received the "seed" of life, to capacitate us for salvation; but are not fully *accepted* with God, till the Spirit have wrought perfection in us. I have nothing at present to do with this statement, only as it shows their belief concerning the Atonement; viz that through the death of Christ all sin was remitted, and the Spirit or seed given to all men. And this, so far as I can obtain the sense of mystical language, is the real meaning of all their writers. Barclay's 5th and 6th "propositions" are, abridged, as follows: "God hath so loved the world, that he hath given his only Son a light; [the words *a light* are an addition to the scripture,] and this light enlighteneth the hearts of all for a time, in order to salvation, if not resisted: *being the purchase of his death, who tasted death for every man.*" The sixth shows that this benefit is *universal;* "Christ tasted death &c. *the benefit of whose offering* is not only extended to such as have the outward knowledge of his death, but to those who are necessarily excluded from this knowledge; yet they may be made partakers of the *mystery of his death*, if they suffer his seed and light to take place." And then he mentions a defect in some "assertors of universal redemption, in that they have not placed the extent of his salvation in that divine and evangelical principle of light and life, wherewith Christ hath enlightened every man that comes into the world."

Thus they believe that, in some way which none of them has explained, Christ obtained by his death the forgiveness of

sins, and put men in a capacity for salvation, by giving them his Spirit or seed. This seed accomplishes the "inward redemption," and Christ accomplished the "outward."—I need not say that this account of the sacrifice for the sins of the world is extremely defective; I need not say to those who read the scriptures that so far as it asserts the actual remission of sins, before repentance, even from the time the Savior suffered, it is *false*. For the Saviour himself said, "except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

The *practical effects* of this belief are such as might be expected; and their practice is a farther evidence that I have correctly stated their sentiment. I confidently ask, *when* do their preachers dwell on the sufferings and atonement of Christ, as the only refuge, righteousness and hope of lost sinners? As I could find no clear doctrinal statement, so I can find no practical *use* of the doctrine, tho' I have looked through several of their principal authors. I look through the Acts and Epistles, and I find the atonement, clearly and repeatedly urged and explained; and made practically to bear on every duty. I find it the incessant theme of inspired preachers; the center of all doctrines and precepts; the hope of trembling sinners; the joy, consolation, and glory of all Christians. If they believe the atonement in the scriptural sense, whence comes this vast difference from the scriptural *use* of it? I have not said they *deny* the doctrine in so many words; but surely they "overlook" it.

I had said, "Generally, all they say or think of Christ, is, of his operations as a Spirit on the human mind." Fr. C. numbers this among my "mistakes." But every one conversant with their writings must know that Christ is represented to be the *same as the Spirit*; and that continual mention is made of his operations on the mind; while next to nothing is said of his incarnation, or his works and sufferings on earth. And all who hear them preach testify, that they direct them not to the scriptures; not to the Cross; not to Jesus, sitting at the right hand of God; but to Christ within them; to Christ within the most wicked.

An extract from the writings of William Penn, (quoted by C. Mather,) will at once explain the meaning of the other writers, and confirm all I have advanced on this subject. He says, "It is a great abomination to say, that God should condemn and punish his innocent Son, that he having satisfied for our sins, we might be justified by the imputation of his perfect righteousness."

Now I have *explained* the doctrine of the atonement, I presume Fr. C. will allow that his brethren "overlook" it. If not, I am persuaded my readers in general will be satisfied, from my quotations, that they neither understand it nor give it its primary place in the scheme of salvation.

## CHAP. V.

### A GENERAL VIEW OF THE QUAKER SYSTEM OF RELIGION.

Though my first intention in taking my pen was to reply to Fr. C. ; yet having entered at some length into the Friends' principles, and having perused their writings more extensively than I had done before, I am led to think it may be required of me to take up some subjects not mentioned in my sermons, or in the observations. I shall throw my remarks into the form of a *general view ;* which will include a brief recapitulation of subjects already discussed

I have attentively, and I trust candidly, examined several of their most approved authors ; whose express object is to give a full statement of their principles to the world ; and I can find

1. No account whatever of the attributes, and perfections, of Jehovah. I find, it is true, occasional *allusions* to *some* of his attributes ; but usually such as to show that the writers had very confused perceptions of the nature and harmony of his glorious perfections. Such for instance is their argument which, from the fact that God is love, excludes all manifestation of wrath or justice from the mission and work of Christ. But no where is God exhibited in their books, as "glorious

in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders—as the Lord God, merciful and gracious, and that will by no means clear the guilty." Now I hold it as a first principle, that we cannot with understanding have that "*fear* of the Lord," which is "the beginning of wisdom;" cannot be *reconciled* to God," nor "*walk* with God," nor have a clear evidence that we are "prepared to *meet* our God"; until we have some *knowledge* of God. We are very liable to deceive ourselves in regard to other principles; and to suppose our own hearts and lives are pleasing to him when they are not, if we think him to be "altogether such an one as ourselves."

2. I can find no account of any *rule or law* by which God governs the world. This I have already noted, in writing on the Atonement. It is solemnly true that I can find scarcely an *allusion* to the law of ten commands, nor any other of a similar nature. If silence on the subject, when they profess to give a full account of the fundamental principles of religion is an evidence of their opinion; then according to them, God has never given a law to his rational creatures—mankind have not transgressed it, and are not under its curse—Christ did not die to honor it, and bear its curse for us—we need not compare ourselves with it to find our guilt and need of mercy—Christians are free from the law indeed—and no man has any occasion to fear its terrors in the judgment day. But what *substitute* have they found? Why, the *light within*, the *seed*, the *new* law, the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus; which is in fact nothing more than natural *conscience*, an unenlightened conscience. Where this will lead men, without the scriptures, I shall show in the second part. Their system then leaves the world without a moral Governor, and themselves without accountability. It is not strange therefore that

3. I can find no recognition of that guilt and ruin which the scriptures describe, into which we have fallen.—"Where there is no law, there is no transgression;" and where the law might be known, but is overlooked, sinners are "alive

without the law." I have shown their ideas of human depravity in the 4th Chap. I will say no more on the subject; only to ask, *when* do quakers apply to Christ, as self-ruined sinners, who have rebelled against God, and, are lying under his righteous condemnation? *When* do they repent, and acknowledge that they have sinned all their days, and that they never had loved God or had one right desire for the knowledge of his ways? *Do* they know the terrors of the Lord?

4. I find nothing explicit concerning the Atonement of Christ; as I have already shown in Chap. 4.

5. I can find no description of Repentance, little statement of our *need* of it, and little allusion of any kind to the subject. The reader needs not be informed that the divine teacher, his 12 and 70 disciples in his life-time, and his Apostles after his ascension, all preached, saying *Repent*; and that the scripture saith, "God now commandeth *all* men *every* where, to *repent*" Why then, in this system of doctrines, do we read nothing, or next to nothing, of that repentance without which all must perish? Nothing of its necessity, nature, and fruits; as flowing from a sight of divine purity; as involving a deep knowledge of sin in ourselves; as leading us to abhor and forsake sin, to love and obey God's law and gospel; as distinguished from worldly sorrow, fear of hell, and remorse of conscience?

6. I can find but a very lame account of justification. By this I mean the pardon of sin to the penitent sinner for Christ's sake—and the acceptance with God of the unrighteous and ungodly, *when* they repent, in "the Lord their righteousness." A Quaker's sins seem to have been forgiven before he was born, even when Christ died. Their *idea* of justification is deemed unscriptural. They do not view it as the act of God in absolving them from guilt and the curse of his law; or in other words as an act of grace in acquitting the guilty, and restoring them to favor. They expressly term it "making a person just or righteous;" by which, as they explain, they mean that the spirit of life enables him to fulfil perfectly the commands of God.

7. I can find no clear description of *faith*. Though I read "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." Though Christ has told us all men have not faith"—and Paul has warned us to have a different faith from "the devils;" yet I can not find that any of their writers has given their ideas of gospel saving faith. Barclay indeed has said much of what I should call the *medium*, of faith, but what he calls the "*object;*" which may be all summed up in this sentence, "The object of this faith is the promise, words or testimony of God, *speaking in the mind.*" Apology, p. 34.—But this wicked men have had—and though we had "*all* faith (of this kind,)so that we could remove mountains," and have not tha t faith that worketh by love, we are nothing. How will the youth, who read Barclay as their principal guide, know whether they have "obtained like precious faith with" Peter, "the faith of God's elect"?

8. We have already seen what ideas they have of Regeneration; that *all* have received the seed of eternal life; of course that all are christians who suffer it to grow.

9. They believe perfection is often attained in this life. That Christians *ought* to be perfect, I grant; and that nothing but their remaining sinfulness prevents. No Christian will be *satisfied* without perfection; but deeply laments and abhors every thing that comes short of it. But the question relates to matter of *fact*. *Are* believers perfect? Were *scripture* saints perfect? Those who are styled so, were perfect, in that they had graces perfect in their kind—had *all* the graces that pertain to a child of God—and sincerely aimed at perfection. But they still had a law in their members, a body of sin and death, under which they groaned being burdened. How is it with the Friends? Barclay has one proposition on the subject, which he discusses through 20 pages; in which he admits that perfection "admits of *growth*" [and so does the perfection of angels,] and "in some part, of a *possibility* of sinning," [and so did Adam's perfection in paradise,] but contends that their hearts "do not obey any suggestions

of the evil one, but are free from actual sinning or transgressing of the law of God, and *in that respect* perfect." I judge not *hearts* but *principles*. I will not say how it may be with those who say they are perfect in our days; but *John* wrote after this manner, "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." *Others* I leave with God; but "if *I* should say I were perfect, that also would prove me perverse." No, my prayer must still be, "God be merciful to me a sinner," tho' one of the Quaker writers, (William Smith, A. D. 1665.) has said of such, they are "not believers; for they that believe in Christ are not miserable sinners." He adds, "In that which they call The Lord's prayer, they generally say, *Our Father;* now the Children of God are not miserable sinners."

10. We have seen how they dispose of the *ordinances*, "which God hath ordained that we should walk in them."

11. The doctrine of eternal rewards and punishments has little place in the quaker system. Kersey has briefly stated their belief in it. But I can find nothing of the kind in Barclay, Tuke, or Clarkson. They hold out no "prize of the high calling" to the Christian; nor do they "persuade" sinners "by the terrors of the Lord." You can scarcely find the words *heaven*, or *hell*, or *eternal life*, or *punishment*, in the whole "Apology." But how frequently are these subjects urged in the oracles of God.

12. It has occurred to me as an observable circumstance that their system affords *no criterion* to determine who are on the Lord's side; by which any man may know of *himself*, or form a tolerable judgment of others, whether they are believers or unbelievers. It is evident that the *scriptures* divide the whole human race into two great classes, them who are of God," and "the world that lieth in wickedness;" and describes clearly the character of each class. Frequent are the occasions in which we must *act* upon *opinion* concerning others, though we cannot always *decide* as to their hearts. But surely it is of the utmost consequence that every individ-

ual should know *himself*, whether he be "*for* Christ or *against* him." Now their writings afford no standard for such a purpose. The evidences of grace, and of being in an impenitent state, are not stated. *All* are represented as having divine life in them, though perhaps hidden. Believers, when translated into the kingdom, are represented as experiencing no thorough change from the state in which all are placed. From this they go on to perfection very gradually. How shall their young friends "judge themselves beforehand, that they be not condemned with the world?"

Let me sum up the contents of this chapter. I would be clearly understood to form my ideas of their religion from their *books*, and occasional *preaching and conversation;* and not from actual acquaintance with any in private life. I still say, that for ought I know, "their hearts may be better than their heads." I only compare their avowed principles with the bible, and consider what must be their natural effect, if cordially believed and embraced. Judging from their *books*, we must conclude, their God is *all mercy*; their moral law, what is right in their own eyes; themselves imperfect and liable to err, but not ruined sinners; their Saviour, a mere Reformer; their scriptures, of equal authority with the writings of Fox, Penn, and Barclay, but *not* equal to their own imaginations; their regeneration, an improvement of good principles; their justification, feeling persuaded they are right; their obligations, just according to the moving of their passions; their worship, thanking God they are not as other men. Their *fruit*, I leave to the observation of those who know them and their *reward* with the Judge of the living and the dead at his appearing and kingdom.

## CHAP. VI.

### A CONCLUDING ADDRESS TO MEMBERS OF THE QUAKER SOCIETY.

*My Friends and Brethren,*

I trust I shall not offend you, after this free discussion of your principles, if I address you as *my* friends. I am not one

of those who entertain unfriendly feelings toward those who differ from them in principle. Nor have I any reason to charge *you* with such an unchristian spirit. I would therefore suppose that you can read what I here present you in the same spirit, with which I am conscious I have *written* it. If I know my heart, I have written, under the influence of a desire to bring your principles and my own to the test of the sacred scriptures. To that test you will doubtless say you are willing to bring your own tenets. You will say you *have* already *often* compared them with the bible. But will not the subject admit of review? Have you not met with many scriptures, quoted in these pages, which *seem* to militate with some of your ideas? Have I not given a fair construction to those scriptures? At least, can you be satisfied, without diligently, candidly and prayerfully, consulting the lively oracles, and judging for yourselves whether the interpretations here proposed are not as rational and scriptural as those of your writers? I pretend not to much skill in the oracles of God—only to a common share of knowledge and judgment. And probably these are better guides to a correct understanding of the scriptures, than more exalted intellectual powers, and high attainments in learning, if the last are not united with a humble teachable spirit. So deceitful is my heart, that I would not be *positive* I have searched with such a spirit. I humbly trust however that I have; I have freely and faithfully written the result of my inquiries and convictions, yet without intentional bitterness or severity. There must to your minds be something unpleasant in the discussion; because my argument opposes some of your favorite principles. But while you remember the discussion is a friendly debate, and not an angry dispute—undertaken for the purpose of investigatng the *truth*, that we all may receive it, whatever it may be; you will be as willing as myself to enter upon it; and as ready upon conviction to renounce what is untenable. I do not aim at making prosolytes from among you; but I am willing to be of the least use in aiding your inquiries after

truth. Indeed I have written to vindicate what I had said before with a full conviction of its truth, more than to make a regular and thorough examination of your creed.

I have assumed, from your profession of christianity, that you will candidly examine what I have written. But I have one particular request to make as to the manner of conducting this inquiry. I must entreat you to make the *scriptures* the *only standard* by which to judge of my remarks. You may *think* otherwise than I have written; and you may *think* you have the Spirit of God to tell you so; but let me affectionately ask you, can you *know* you have that Spirit? Is there no danger of deception, if you follow an internal guide? Or *can* it be the Spirit of God, which leads your minds away from the truth as it is in Jesus, and as you find it in the holy scriptures? Taking the same counsel to myself—holding myself ready to renounce any principle I hold, when convinced it is not found in the sacred writings—I ask no more of you. Praying that God would enable us all to search and understand the scriptures—that his Spirit may open our understandings to behold wondrous things out of his law—that he would dispose us to love and obey his truth, and make it known to all nations for the obedience of faith—I submit my remarks to you and to the world, and bid you an affectionate farewell.

A. R.

# PART II.

## A VINDICATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, AS THE SUFFICIENT AND ONLY GUIDE.

## CHAP. I.

### ON THE EXISTING NECESSITY FOR THIS WORK. THE POINT AT ISSUE CLEARLY STATED.

Deism, or direct infidelity, appears to have retired before the light of truth, clearly exhibited by the friends of the gospel. Now the faithful are summoned to defend the bible against another and more covert attack. The deceiver seems satisfied to admit the scriptures to be *a revelation* from God; but attempts to persuade us they are not the *only* nor *principal* one. He would induce us to expect a *continuance* of the same divine communications to us, which were made to the sacred writers, and in the same supernatural manner. It is not enough for him *to pervert and wrest* the truths of scripture, by proposing *false constructions* of their sense: he seems determined to *render the rule itself almost useless*, by degrading while he admits it, and proposing to show unto us "a more excellent way."

There are many who profess Christianity, and would be received as preachers of the gospel, who do not profess to derive their doctrines and sentiments from the bible alone; but who appeal for authority to *another* standard, *independent* of the scriptures, *superior and more infallible*. Since the reformation; when men forsook the Romish communion, renounced the decisions of mother church and an infallible Pope, and regained possession of the key of knowledge; Christians have usually appealed, in their various debates, to the lively oracles of God. From their decision there has been no appeal, except to the tribunal of Christ, in the day of the revelation of God's righteous judgment. To this course there have been exceptions; for some have exal-

ted *reason* above the scriptures; and occasionally an *enthusiast* has arisen, who gave out that he was some great one, and pretended to special communications from above. Yet the light of truth, the majesty of the scriptures, and the mercy of God, had long preserved the greater part of the reformed Churches from such delusions. Within the period of one generation past, particularly in this part of the world, pretences to divine communications seem to have multiplied. The number is great of those who claim to be inspired equally with the sacred writers, and the Apostles of our Lord.

The sentiments of these persons may be reduced to these *five.*

1 The scriptures are *a record* of the word of God, like any other history; but are *not the word of God.*

2. The scriptures in general are *true;* but they are *a dead letter and useless* till the Spirit enable us to understand them, or *reveal the same things* to us.

3. The Spirit *still continues*, in all men who do not resist it, the same work of revelation or *inspiration* which he did in scripture-times.

4. Where the scriptures are known, they are useful, in connection with the Spirit; for the Spirit teaches nothing contrary to them.

5. Where the scriptures are *unknown*, and the gospel was *never preached* by man, there the Spirit reveals Christ *without* the written word. The *heathen are taught* the way of life, as well as Christians.

This particular statement seems proper for the sake of explicitness. Perhaps all the ideas may be comprized in this sentence: '*The Spirit now inspires believers as truly as ever, and in all parts of the world; in harmony with the scriptures, and making use of them, where they are enjoyed; but standing in no need of them, and being in every sense superior to that dead letter, as a guide in matters of religion.*'

The reader will observe in this creed a recognition of the

scriptures ; not indeed as the word of God, not as the only and sufficient rule of faith and practice ; but as a *record* of the word, a true history of real facts, and useful by the aid of the Spirit to those who are favored with them. The persons in question therefore are not direct infidels and avowed deists ; and the labor of one who contests their principles must necessarily differ in some respects from the course which has so often been pursued with those who totally deny the bible. The object of this treatise therefore will be, not so much to prove that the scriptures are from God, as that new revelations are *not* from him—to prove not so much their divine *origin*, as their *sufficiency* ; not so much their *truth*, as their *authority* ; not so much that they are *a* rule or guide, as that they are the *only* guide. We are called to raise the bible from a state of *degradation*, and give it its true place as containing the lively oracles of God, in opposition to the claims of men's fancies and satan's devices.

Our opponents differ among themselves respecting *the degree of authority and importance* to be given to the scriptures. Some speak of them with much respect ; others with indifference ; and others, I lament to say, with contempt. Some allow the inspiration and authority of a *part*, but reject other parts as uninspired and false. Some place them *on an equality* with authentic and correct *human writings* ; but deny that the writers were " moved by the holy Ghost ;" and value them *above* human writings *only* as they treat *on divine subjects*, and their authors had better *opportunities* than others for writing correctly and profitably. Others admit the *inspiration of the whole ; but claim equal inspiration for themselves.* They *all agree* however in saying they *are not the word of God ; and are only a secondary and inferior rule.* While my principal aim will be to expose the falsity of the general sentiment, I shall not entirely lose sight of these varieties.

If it be not a fact, that God, does now inspire men as he did the Prophets and Apostles, it is evident that those who be-

lieve it must be in a dangerovs error. They are led away from the guide which God has given them, and follow they know not what. It is believed the consequences of this departure from the light have already been very deplorable; and promise to become far more extensive and ruinous, if the scriptures are not soon holden up more conspicuously to view, and the attention of men called back to that light to their feet, and lamp to their paths. To the "scriptures of truth," as to a light shining in a dark place, would we direct the minds of our fellow-mortals, till the day dawn, and the day-star arise in their hearts.

Some readers, unacquainted with those who avow the above sentiments, may demand *evidence of the facts* here asserted, that the scriptures *are* thus degraded, and that pretences to new revelations *exist*, to any great extent in the community. Evidence shall be given.

All I have imputed to any persons is asserted by the *Friends.* Clarkson's Portraiture, vol. 2. p. 113. "The Quakers believe—that the spirit of God was given to man—among other purposes, as a teacher of good and evil, or to serve him as a guide in spiritual concerns;" by which he may "attain a knowledge sufficient to enable him to discover the path of his duty both to God and his fellow-man." P. 130. "This Spirit of God—the Quakers usually distinguish by the epithets of *primary* and *infallible.* They have pronounced it to be the *only* infallible guide to men in their spiritual concerns It is a doctrine of the society that the Spirit of God is the primary and only infallible, and the scriptures but a *subordinate* or *secondary* guide." P. 14. "With respect to *the heathens*—the Quakers believe that God's holy Spirit *became a guide also to them,* and furnished them, as it had done the Patriarchs and Jews, with a rule of practice."

Barclay's second proposition, in his Apology, p 3. contains the following:—"The testimony of the Spirit is that alone by which the true knowledge of God hath been, is, and can be only revealed; who,—by the revelation of the same

Spirit hath manifested himself all along unto the sons of men, both patriarchs, prophets, and apostles; which revelations of God by the Spirit, whether by outward voices, dreams, or inward *objective manifestations in the heart*, were of old the *formal object* of their faith, and remain yet so to be; since the object of the saint's faith is the same in all ages, though set forth under divers administrations. Moreover—these divine inward revelations neither do nor can ever contradict the outward testimony of the scriptures, or right and sound reason. *Yet from hence it will not follow*, that these divine revelations are *to be subjected to the examination*, either of the outward testimony of the scriptures, or to the natural reason of man, as to a more noble or certain rule or touchstone: for this divine revelation, and inward illumination, is that which is evident and clear of itself, forcing the well-disposed understanding to assent, irresistibly moving the same thereunto." That is, in plain language, "The Spirit reveals truth to man, by special inspiration, in all ages, as truly and fully as he did to the Prophets and Apostles. In so doing, he does not contradict the scriptures. But his inward revelations are so superior to the scriptures, so absolutely certain to the mind by their own evidence, that they are not to be examined or tried, either by scripture or reason." On this proposition he expends forty-eight octavo pages.

Barclay's 3d proposition, p. 4. contains the following: "From these revelations of the Spirit of God to the saints have proceeded the scriptures of truth. Nevertheless, because they are only a declaration of the fountain, and not the fountain itself, therefore they are *not* to be esteemed the *principal* ground of all truth and knowledge, *nor yet the primary rule* of faith and manners. Yet, because they give a true and faithful testimony of the first foundation, they are to be esteemed a *secondary* rule, *subordinate* to the Spirit, from which they have all their excellency and certainty." Pp. 109, 110, he has two propositions united, "concerning the *universal redemption* by Christ; and also the *saving and*

*spiritual light, wherewith every man is enlightened.*" The propositions themselves are long, and are argued through eighty-seven pages. The substance of the whole is an attempt to prove that *heathen and all nations* have by the Spirit *a saving knowledge of Christ without the scriptures or the preaching of the gospel.*

Kersey, Tuke, and others, concur in these sentiments. It is to be hoped there are none at present in the society of Friends, who would imitate their more zealous ancestors in saying, "thy bible is the word of the devil." (See part 1. Chap. 5.) Yet they continue to deny the scriptures the honorable appellation, "the word of God." Tuke's Principles, p. 33. "There is a name by which the holy scriptures are frequently distinguished, which appears to be in divers respects exceptionable, namely, the Word of God." Kersey's Treatise, p. 18. "The society of Friends do not agree with those professors of Christianity, who say the Scriptures are the word of God."

Many persons who are not Quakers agree with them in deeming the scriptures a subordinate rule, and in the belief that they have new revelations; and perhaps far exceed the present Quakers in degrading the sacred volume, and following "vain imaginations." But it is out of my power to produce many printed authorities for the truth of this assertion. The persons and sects to whom I allude have rarely published much. Something might be gathered from small fugitive pieces which have issued from the press; such as memoirs of individuals, accounts of religious experiences and revivals, and books of hymns. But I assert facts well known to multitudes in this section of the country, and to some in almost or quite every town, when I say, that the sentiments above named are prevalent with the free-will Baptists, and with some others. It is a matter of public notoriety that preachers frequently assert, the scriptures are not the word of God; that they frequently style it a dead letter; and stigmatize a belief of its doctrines, and a careful study of its pages, as formality, and reverting to Judaism and human tradi-

tions. That they speak particularly of the old Testament as antiquated and useless. That they put themselves on an equality with the Apostles, and speak of them as familiarly as they do of one another. That they often bring objections against some passages of scripture as erroneous; and have frequently been known to ask, "how can the *whole* bible be the word of God, when it contains in so many instances, the words of *men*, of *wicked* men, and even of devils?" It is well known to be a very *common* thing for preachers to aver that they receive their message and doctrine *immediately from God*; and to boast that they have not *learned* it from *the bible*. That they and their hearers judge of sentiments, practices, experiences, and evidences of grace; in themselves, in each other, and in other men; *not* by comparing these things with *scripture*; but by *dreams, visions, voices, revelations, inward suggestions, and inward feelings*. When these facts are considered by the reader, I will no longer insult his judgment by offering reasons for my undertaking the present little work.

Socinians and other liberal Christians among the more informed part of the community are possibly not aware that they have so numerous a body of allies in the work of mutilating the scriptures, and of denying their inspiration while they allow their authenticity.* But such is the fact. And it furnishes another evidence of a truth which has sometimes been remarked before, that opposite errorists, and despisers of gospel truth often meet unexpectedly on the same ground. Who would have supposed, that they who *idolize reason* and *ridicule the* work of the *Spirit*, should be found fellow-workers with those who have *abandoned* reason, *to follow* the Spirit *alone*? That these very different guides should lead both parties to degrade and abandon the only true and infallible rule, the scriptures of truth? That liberality and fanaticism should meet in Christian fellowship, and unchris-

*See the Improved Version, and Buckminster's Sermon on the Epistle to Philemon.

tianize the residue of the Christian world ?—Strange as the coalition may appear, the believer in the scriptures may derive a confirmation to his faith from the circumstance. He may feel an additional confidence in the Rock of his hope, as both a rational and spiritual foundation, when he finds the failure both of the self-wise and the visionary in their several ways; and when he sees them both assail in vain the scriptures of eternal truth.

This work will probably never meet the eye of the devotee of reason. It is written for the other class, and those who may be exposed to their influence. Designed for *usefulness*, it is purposely written in a plain familiar style. Let us now proceed to the discussion, recollecting that the questions in debate are these ; "*Are the scriptures the sufficient and only rule of faith and practice in this age of the world* ; *or do men receive additional revelations by inspiration?* Is the *bible* the guide " that should come ; or do we look for another ?"

## CHAP. II.

### WHETHER THE SCRIPTURES ARE "THE WORD OF GOD."

It need not again be asserted that very many persons *deny* that the scriptures are the Word of God; persons too who admit, wholly or in part, their authenticity as containing true accounts of facts and doctrines. It is common for them to say, " they are not the word, but a *record* of the word." At first view, this appears to be only a difference in *terms* : they seem to object only to the *expression*, while they believe all we mean by it. And I have met with some, who have argued to this effect. If this were *all*, both in their intention, and in the effects of their assertions upon their followers ; I should not deem their sentiment peculiarly dangerous, nor would I contend for a *name*. But this is *not* all. Examined closely, their meaning goes, at least, to place the scriptures *below the inward teacher*. To *this* they give the titles, " the

Word of God, the Voice of the Lord, and Preacher of righteousness." And whatever is *intended*, they are generally and almost necessarily *understood* by this denial, to say that the bible does not contain a sufficient revelation from God; and by some are almost unavoidably understood to deny the inspiration of the scriptures, as fully as infidels do. Believing therefore that the name (word of God) is a very proper one for the scriptures, (if they mean to object to nothing more than the name;) believing also that they do mean much more, and that the effects of a belief of the sentiment are very detrimental; I shall endeavour to prove that they *are* the word of God, and ought to be *called* so.

It will be proper *first* to state and answer some *objections* which are urged against the use of the term. Those which have fallen within my notice are *three*.

1. It is said "the bible is composed of ink and paper; it may be torn in pieces, or burnt, or decay by the ravages of time; but who can suppose that *this* is the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever?" Let my readers be assured this objection has often been *seriously* brought forward. On this principle, if the objector should receive a letter from a distant friend, in his own hand-writing, bearing undoubted marks of authenticity, let him give no heed to it. If it should contain the most distressing or joyful intelligence, let him neither weep nor rejoice. He has only to put the frail thing in the fire, and all remains as before he received it. If it contained the dying advice of a father, intended to direct him through life, and smooth his dying pillow, still let him only burn the letter, or tear it in pieces and scatter it in the wind, and he is free. If the objector possesses notes of hand, bonds, or obligations against any of his neighbors, he may as well destroy them, or give them up to the promisers. They will not "abide forever;" nor is he sure they will for a single day. They are nothing but ink and paper, and liable to be burnt before they become due. On this principle, the public acts of the government, written or printed, are—

very useless things. But what child is so weak as not to know that we do not *mean* the ink and paper of the bible, but its *truth*, conveyed in human language, and *by means* of these material things? No, it is folly to urge this objection against the book of God. Its truths are registered in heaven, and will be the rule of decision upon our eternal states, when we stand before God. Its truths ought to be engraven on our memory and the tablet of our heart. One bible with care will usually suffice for the life of one person; or if it should perish, another can be procured. True, it *can* be burnt; it *has* been burnt a vast number of times. But still it survives; and there are now more copies in the world than ever before. It now bids fair to survive all the malice of its enemies, and fill the world with its saving light.

2. It is objected that "the Scriptures cannot *all* be the word of God, because they contain, in many places, the words of *men*, of *wicked men*, and even of *devils*." Reply. For some good purpose, (generally evident from the connection) the sacred writers were "moved by the holy Ghost" to *record* these speeches, but *not to approve* them. The *fact* that such wicked words were spoken, by wicked men or devils, rests on divine authority, and is given "for our instruction." We do *not mean* that *every sentence, taken separately*, is the word of God, or expresses his mind; but that the *whole account* in which any such wicked words are found, is "given by inspiration of God," and may be called his word. Thus, in the history of Christ given by Matthew (for an instance,) we find frequent accounts of the cavils, objections, revilings, and calumnies of the Pharisees. The evident object of the sacred writer is to give us an idea of those men; to furnish an instance of human depravity; to exhibit the wisdom, the meekness, the patience, and the fidelity of our Lord, as they could not have been shown, if we had read of no such adversaries; and to vindicate his justice in casting such offenders out of his church. No one would say that any of their vile speeches was the word of God; but I

believe the whole account, or gospel of Matthew is the word of the living God. Take a paralled case. Suppose a man of veracity relates to me an awful instance of murder and robbery which he had witnessed, and repeats some of the horrid expressions of malice, rage, and perhaps impiety, which he heard on the occasion. He has a good purpose in view in relating the *facts;* to warn me against the murderer; to affect my heart with the sufferings of the victim; to give me an example of the awful lengths to which human depravity can go. I should not say that the words of the murderer were the words of my friend; but I should say with propriety that the *whole account* rested *on his word*, and that I believed it on *his testimony*. If any one should doubt the truth of the relation, I could say, I have my friend's word for it; or, it is *the word* of my friend. Who was ever in doubt, when reading the scriptures, *where* the mind of God is expressed, and *where* we are to *take his word* respecting the wicked actions or expressions of bad men and devils?

3. It is objected that *Christ* is called "the Word of God;" and therefore it is improper to give that title to the scriptures.

In reply I shall *admit* that our Redeemer, among the variety of titles given him to express his various offices, excellencies and glories, is called the Word of God. He is so called in the first chapter of John's gospel, in one of his epistles, and in the Revelation. I know of no other passages in which it is *certain* this title is given to Christ. There are a few others, which may be so understood without evident violence to the sense. But this application of the term does not prevent its being applied to the scriptures. Christ probably receives this title because he has "declared" the Father to us. But the several communications or messages by "holy men, who spake as they were moved by the holy Ghost; which are written for our instruction," and are collected in the bible; these severally and collectively are a declaration of Jesus Christ and God the Father, and may properly be called the

word of God. This objection assumes that a word or phrase cannot be properly used in more than one sense, or signify more than one person or thing. But this is an egregious mistake. In all kinds of writing and discourse, and in all the few languages with which I am acquainted, (and I presume in most others,) it is a *very common* thing for a word or phrase to sustain different meanings in different situations; so that the true idea in each instance must be ascertained from the connection. Christ is called the "son of man"; and so was *Ezekiel*. The term *law* in scripture means the *ten commands*; the levitical *rites and ceremonies*; the *judicial code* of the Hebrews, or some one particular statute; *the gospel*; *the consience of the Gentiles*; the *Spirit of life* in the believer; and *the remains of sinful propensities* in converted Paul. I need adduce no other instances. It is apparent the scriptures *may*, with propriety, be termed the word of God; *although* the term is applied to Christ. We use the term *word* (of *man*,) in different senses. If I hear a person speak, I call the thing spoken his *word*. If, long afterward, I *repeat* what was spoken, I say this is the *word* of my friend. Of a *promise* from him, I say I have his *word* for it. If another doubt the fulfilment, I say, I can depend on his *word*, meaning his *veracity*. But, what is more marvellous still, I have received a *letter* from a distant friend. Though I have heard no speech nor sound; yet I call the substance of the letter my friend's *word*; and here again I rely upon his *word*.

Having disposed of objections, and shown that there is nothing improper in such an application of the term, I will now prove that they *are* so called. I make little account of the fact that they have generally received this title among Christians from time immemorial. It is sufficient that the scriptures give *themselves* this name. It is adequate authority, if inspired men have so termed their own messages, and those of each other; if the holy Ghost, the Father by a voice from heaven, and Christ while he taught on earth, have employed the same phrase. All this will be made to appear. My opponents

usually allow the scriptures are *true*. Let them therefore testify for themselves, and give us their own title. Let us ask the bible, "what sayest thou of *thyself*?" God did not reveal at one time all which is contained in the bible; but at sundry times, and in divers manners spake unto the fathers by the Prophets, and in later times spake unto men by his Son. The words of Christ were confirmed unto men of subsequent ages by them that heard him, his holy Apostles. Now each of these messages or revelations was severally the word of God; and all of them collectively are his word. Any single message by a Prophet, that of Isaiah to King Hezekiah for instance, was the word of God; and all the separate messages of the same Prophet were therefore His word. Paul's letter to the Romans was God's word to them; his letter to the Ephesians his word to them; and all his letters the word of the living God to us.

Passages will bear upon this argument, which contain any of these expressions; "word of God, word of the Lord, word of Jehovah, word of Christ, *my* word, (when God speaks,) *thy* word, (when God is addressed) *his* word, (when God is spoken of,) or simply *the* word, (when the connection shews that the word of *God* is intended.)

If Christ is called the † Word of God *seven times*, (certainly not more than twice seven,) the divine messages which now compose the scriptures are so called more than *two hundred* times. A few only of these can here be quoted. Deut. 4. 2. Moses says to the people, "Ye shall not add unto *the word* which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it; that ye may keep the commandments *of the Lord thy God*, which I command you." Here, speaking of the statutes, judgments, and commandments, (see verse 1.) which God had given them by him, he evidently calls them *the word*, and as obviously means the word *of God*. Deut. 30. 14. "But *the word* (*of God* unquestionably,) is nigh thee, in

†It may be new to some readers to remark that when the term *Word* applies to *Christ*, it begins with a capital letter.

thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it." A mystic would say he means an *inward* teacher. But let Moses explain himself. Vers. 11—13. "For *this commandment*, which *I* command thee *this day*, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off, &c.; but the word is nigh thee &c.—Paul, quoting this passage, adds, "that is, the word of faith that *we preach*." 1 Chron. 16. 15. David, by the holy Ghost, thus speaks of the covenant with Abraham, &c. concerning the land of Canaan; "Be ye mindful always of his covenant; *the word* which *he* commanded to a thousand generations" Isa. 45. 23. "I have sworn by myself; *the word* is gone out of my mouth, and shall not return; [*what word* ?] that unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear." In the explanation Christ gave of the parable of the sower, Mark 4. 14. &c. this expression, *the word*, is used eight times; and Luke on the same subject says, "the seed is the word *of God*." Is *Christ* here meant; or the *gospel message?* They who receive the word are said to *hear* the word; referring to their hearing *preaching or instruction*. Would our Lord represent *himself* as being scattered like seed; as *sowing himself;* as *being sown* by a minister? Would he describe *himself* as being caught away by satan, choked by the cares of life, or perishing on stoney places? The expressions are natural, when understood of the preaching of the gospel, its reception, and effects. Mark 16. 19, 20. "So then, after the Lord [Christ] had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth and *preached* every where, the Lord [Christ] working with them, and confirming *the word* with signs following." Is not *the word* which the Apostles *preached* made very distinct from *Christ*? It was undoubtedly their *message* which is called the word; and this was not *their own*; not the word of *man*, but of *God*.

If the term *word* mean *Christ* alone, then we may *substitute* the term Christ wherever the other occurs, and still preserve the sense and propriety of the passage. Let us make

the alteration in a few passages, and observe the result. John 12. 48. *Christ* says, "The word [Christ] that I have *spoken*, the same shall judge him in the last day." John 14. 24. "He that loveth me not, keepeth not my *sayings*; and the word [Christ] which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me." John 15. 3. "Now ye are clean through the word [Christ] which I have *spoken* unto you." John 17. Jesus, praying for his disciples to the Father, says, ver. 6. "thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word [Christ.] Ver. 14. I have given them thy word [Christ.] Ver. 18. Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word [Christ] is truth. Ver. 20. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through *their word* [their Christ]" The Apostles were to be *preachers* of the word, or gospel of Christ; and it was a message from *God*. Rom. 10. 17. "So then faith cometh *by hearing* (not internal revelation,) and hearing by *the word of God*," or *preaching of the gospel*. 1 Cor. 5. 19. Paul writes, *God* "hath committed unto us *the word* of reconciliation"; the gospel message with which they were intrusted. Col. 3. 16. "Let the *word of Christ* dwell richly in you in all wisdom." Does the Apostle mean the *Christ of Christ?* 1 Thess. 2. 13. "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the *word of God* which ye *heard of us*, ye received it, not as the word of men, but (as it *is in truth*) *the word of God*." He certainly means his preaching here. Did he *know* that *was truly* the word of God; or did he give it a wrong name? Rev. 12. 11. "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word [Christ] of their testimony." 2. Tim. 2. 15. "Study to show thyself approved unto God, *a workman* that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly *dividing the word* of truth." On this I only ask, in the words of the Apostle on another occasion, *is Christ divided?*

Prov. 30. 5. "*Every* word of God is pure." If this mean *Christ*, I ask, *how many* Christs are there? If it be retorted,

how many *messages* are there? the answer is easy. There have been a great number, at different times. *Each* of them separately was the word of God. *All* of them collected, and forming one message or revelation to us, are the word of God. Mark 7. 13. The Savior refers the Pharisees to the law of Moses, and then mentions the commandments which *they* had imposed on the people. He adds, "making the *word of God*, (i. e. the law by Moses,) of none effect through your traditions." Luke 3. 2. "*The word of God* came to John *in the wilderness*." But John never saw *Jesus* till he came to him *at Jordan* to be baptized; as may be seen, John 1. Luke 8. 21. "My mother and my brethren are these which hear the *word of God*, and *do it*." A manner in which he would not speak of *himself*. Acts 6. 2, 4. "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the *ministry of the word*." May we infer, it *was* reason that the *brethren* who were chosen to the office here proposed by the Apostles *should* leave *Christ* to serve tables? The twelve would not wash their own hands from the guilt of *apostacy*, and yet recommend the crime to their brethren. 2 Cor. 2. 12. "I came to Troas *to preach Christ's Gospel*. Ver. 17. For we are not as many which corrupt the *word of God*;" evidently referring to *Christ's Gospel* which he had *preached*. Eph. 6. 17. "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is *the word of God*." Is *Christ* the sword of the Spirit? See also Isa. 40, 8. Luke 5, 1. Acts 8. 14, 25. and 11. 1. and 13. 7, 44, 46, 48, 49. and 19. 10, 20. Rom. 9. 6 1 Cor. 14. 36, and the following; which shew that *Christ's* word is something distinct from himself; and it will not be questioned that *his* word is the *same as God's*. Luke 4. 32. John 4. 41. Matt. 24. 35. John 5. 24, and 8 31, 37, 43. Rev. 3. 8. To these numerous quotations might be added many more.

The reader will probably be surprized to learn, after reading these quotations, that the society of Friends refuse to call

the scriptures by any other name *than that which they claim for themselves*;" and therefore cannot call them the *word of God*. Kersey, p. 20. The reader may have noticed that many of the preceding passages are taken from the gospel of *John*. But Clarkson observes, Vol. II. p. 276. "The Quakers apprehend that *Christ* is the word of God. They cannot therefore consistently give to the scriptures *that name* which St. John the Evangelist gives *exclusively* to the Son of God." Yet this appellation, so scrupulously reserved for Christ alone, and denied to the holy scriptures, is freely applied to *their own* revelations, which they profess to receive. Take the following specimen from Fox, the founder of Quakerism. A letter to a minister begins thus: "*The word of the Lord* to thee, O Lampitt." Another to his hearers thus: "*The word of the Lord God* to all the people that follow priest Lampitt, who is a blind guide."—Perhaps we may question the propriety of *this* appellation; but I think we cannot hesitate to receive *the bible* as the word of our God, which shall stand forever.

## CHAP. III.

### REASONING FOR THE INFERIORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES, AND IN FAVOR OF NEW REVELATIONS, EXAMINED.

On this part of the subject recourse must again be had to that giant of demonstration, Robert Barclay; and other writers among the Friends. Other sects, as I have before noticed, have published but little. They also have little to do with "reasoning," particularly as to the *fact* of their being inspired. For themselves, they *know* it infallibly; and this persuasion precludes argument and inquiry. To gain credit with their followers, confident assertion is sufficient, without argument from scripture or reason. I shall therefore make Barclay's reasoning the particular subject of examination; not neglecting entirely arguments or rather assertions of more modern date.

Barclay's *first* argument for the Spirit as a guide superior to the Scriptures is, in substance, as follows: "The scriptures were themselves given by the Spirit; he must be superior to his own work, or word; *therefore* the scriptures cannot be the principal ground and origin of all faith and knowledge." Let us apply this argument to other cases. I receive an account of events I have not myself witnessed, from a man of veracity. The account is of vast importance to my interest, and has an important bearing upon my conduct. But the account itself depends entirely on my informer; he must certainly be "superior to his own work or word;" *therefore* the account is of no manner of use to me. At least I can make little use of it, without having recourse every moment to its author. A master gives all necessary directions to a servant concerning a particular business, and for a certain time; during which time he is absent, or has bidden the servant expect no farther orders. How clear it is that these orders derive all their meaning, truth, and authority *from* the master; and that *he* is himself vastly *superior* to his own directions. What a fool then must the servant be to give any heed to his orders, except his master is every moment at hand, and giving new commands. If he wants *explanations* of orders already given; if cases occur to which his orders do *not extend*; or if his master has given intimations that further directions would come; still he may apply—but the case is entirely different from the former. Again, to use Clarkson's similitude, rivers and streams depend upon their fountains or springs; the scriptures flow from the Spirit in like manner; therefore they are inferior. But is the stream which runs by my dwelling no river to me, and must I make no use of its waters, because I have never traced it, perhaps hundreds of miles, to its source; or because its fountain is hidden in the bowels of a mountain? It *is* a river; its waters are useful; it continues to flow; it will flow to the end of my life; and probably to the end of the world. The truths of the bible flowed from the Spirit and are inferior to him in many res-

pects. But, as a rule of faith and practice, they are *superior* to the Spirit; *unless* it be *first* proved that inspiration is still continued. This is a stream of living water, which makes glad the city of our God; its waters are pure; when *applied* by the *sanctifying* influence of the Spirit; "they are spirit, and they are life." This river flows from the throne of God and the Lamb; but who has explored the fountain-head? Let the sun be another emblem. His rays flow from him, and depend on him; he is therefore vastly superior to them. Are we then without light and heat, till the sun himself come down to the earth and consume us?

2. Barclay argues: "The very nature of the gospel itself declareth that the scriptures cannot be the only and chief rule to Christians; else there should be no distinction betwixt the *law* and the *gospel*."

This argument rests entirely on the gratuitous assumption that the *law* was *outward and carnal*, and the *gospel internal and spiritual*. It assumes what we do not grant, that there is no gospel preached, given, or dispensed, until it be *written in our hearts*. Neither has this writer *proved* his assumption. Till it *be* proved, it will be sufficient to remark that the argument fails with its foundation. Some farther light on the subject may be afforded hereafter, when we distinguish the revelation of new truth from renewing grace.

3. Barclay next degrades the scriptures as a guide below the Spirit, "because they are not sufficiently *full* to point out duty in every case." It is granted, that the word does not describe every peculiar situation in which a person may be placed; nor minutely assign the duties incumbent on him there. But every particular case will fall under some general direction; and he who searches the scriptures with a docile prayerful spirit may not long hesitate concerning duty; may know what the Lord would have him to do, without any revelation besides the lively oracles of God. He thinks them particularly defective in "that which of all things it is most needful for him to know, to wit, whether he be really

in the faith, and an heir of salvation, or not." He affirms, "the scripture can give him no certainty in this case, neither can it be a rule to him." I grant that no person, in our day, can find his name recorded in the bible, or be there explicitly informed that it is, or is not, written in the Lamb's book of life. God has clearly described *characters and persons* in the scriptures; their hearts and lives; the *impenitent* on the one hand, and *believres* on the other; and each class in all their varieties. And by comparing ourselves with this standard, we may ascertain "whether we are in the faith, and heirs of salvation, or not." The light is so clear and full, that no one need be ignorant of his true character and standing for eternity. Still it may be said, a difficulty remains. There is a criterion by which we may compare ourselves; but how shall we know *curselves* in order to *make* the comparison? Surely by *examining* ourselves; by looking into the perfect law of liberty, and continuing therein. Barclay points out *another* method of ascertaining one's character. An office for which he declares the scriptures so incompetent, he assigns to the Spirit. The same sentiment is stated and defended at much greater length in the Wesleyan Methodist platform; and is heard almost perpetually in the mouths of free willers. They assert, If a person is converted, he *knows* it; it is revealed to him by the Spirit; by some inward voice, light, impulse, or suggestion; which is in every respect as sure as if Christ stood personally before him, and said, thy sins are forgiven thee. They contend for direct, positive, and conclusive testimony. Whether the many who believe they have this witness in themselves will find it even so in the day of decision, I know not. If we may know them here *by their fruits*, it may not be improper to say that *some* have been known to live in habitual sin, who were in this way *perfectly assured* of their being new creatures. So that if a certainty cannot be attained by the scriptures, (and I admit a possibility of deception, but only by our own fault,) there is the same uncertainty in the decisions of their "infallible Spirit."

4. "That cannot (says Barclay,) be the only, principal, nor chief rule, which doth not universally reach every individual that needeth it, to produce the necessary effect." He then mentions deaf and dumb people, children, and idiots, as persons excluded from the saving efficacy of the scriptures. It is surprizing that a man of such powers of reasoning should adopt such a method of arguing; should adduce those, who *in all other things* are mere *exceptions* to general rules, *not* as exceptions to *this*, but as persons to whom the rule must apply, or the rule itself be false. But the scriptures are *addressed* to those who "have ears to hear," and not to the deaf; to those who have understanding, and not to infants; to those who know good from evil, and not to idiots. Furthermore, to make the argument bear upon the subject, it must be proved that the Spirit *does* teach these persons, though the scriptures cannot. Let well-authenticated facts be produced therefore, *to prove* that a child ever attained to a clear knowledge of Christ, before he could receive instruction from the scripture; or that a person born deaf, or early becoming so, and afterwards restored to hearing, had known the way of life previous to that restoration; or that an idiot was ever *wise unto salvation*, while he was a fool in all other respects.

Adults can often remember their very early ideas: can any one recollect a clear knowledge of Christ which he had before he was taught by human means? Deaf and dumb persons have been taught a kind of language, by which they can receive and communicate ideas: do they not, without exception tell us, that till that happy period they were ignorant of God and Jesus Christ, whom to know is life eternal? Very rare is the instance, where an idiot has obtained the use of reason, by a surgical operation upon the head. It is presumed that not one of this description has ever testified that he had previously received a revelation of Jesus Christ. If it be asked what will be the fate of these unfortunate creatures? we can only say that God who made them will do right with them; and the scheme in question seems to bring them no more help than the bible does.

Even if there were the clearest evidence that such persons *have* a knowledge of God and salvation by the Spirit, it would not afford the least evidence that those who can read or hear the scriptures are taught in the same way. God *might* adopt this method in such exempt cases, and yet ordinarily teach us by the scriptures.

5. Barclay objects to the scriptures as a guide, because they have been so often translated and copied, that we cannot be certain of their correctness and accordance with what was first written. He has given a frightful account of the variations, additions, and erasures, in the different copies; the mistakes of translators, transcribers, interpreters, and printers; evidently attempting to make the most of them, and weaken the confidence of his readers in the inspired writings. He has taken this course as fully as if he had been an infidel, an inveterate enemy of the truth and inspiration of the bible.

Many who degrade the scriptures scarcely know that the English scriptures *are* a translation: they are still less acquainted with facts concerning the ages in which, and the persons by whom they were written, and the manner of their transmission to us. Yet not a few of them have heard of this learned objection; so much more readily and rapidly does error circulate than truth. They who scarcely know what a translation is, will complain of the inaccuracy of ours. They who can read but one language can tell us our translators have deceived us.

Now it is freely admitted that our version does not always give the sense of the original so clearly and definitely as it might: that in some instances it even gives an erroneous idea; that there are many slight differences among the various copies now extant in the original languages: and that in some cases it is difficult for the best informed critic, with the best means, to ascertain beyond a doubt what was originally written by the pen of inspiration. Yet it may be confidently asserted that all the variations or errors, which a candid critic will find, do not alter in the least degree the grand principles

of the oracles of God; do not affect materially one doctrine revealed, or duty enjoined. The scriptures were translated into numerous languages in early and later ages of the Christian church; they were quoted by many theological and other writers.

Many of these versions and quotations are still extant. It is plain that all these are severally checks upon each other. On comparing these, it is not surprizing that small variations should be discovered. But it is truly astonishing there should be so few; and that the sacred penmen are thus made to mind and speak the same things, to numerous nations, in their several tongues, for a long succession of ages. Nothing will account for this fact but the superintending care of Him, whose truths and wonderful works are therein declared.

Critics of very different theological sentiments, derived from their *interpretations* of the sacred word, have notwithstanding agreed in the acknowledgement that the holy scriptures are in our day very entire. Where then is the ground for the cavilling of the infidel against their correctness? And of what weight is the objection of Barclay? I am aware indeed that those who make *reason* a guide superior to the bible, scruple not to deny the authenticity of every passage which will neither bow to the dictates of that omnipotent and absolute judge, nor submit to be wrested from its obvious meaning. But no man of candor can allow these to be *candid* critics. When therefore, with only such an exception as *this*, and of *another* class who *must* prove that the bible is inferior to the Spirit, *all other* believers agree in appealing to the scriptures now extant as authentic and entire, we may regard that point as sufficiently settled.

A more modern invention than the above arrives at the same point by a far more convenient and speedy process. I am credibly informed it has been actually adopted in this region. It is said a certain preacher informed his hearers that the Apostle Paul appeared to him in a vision or dream and told him, "he *never meant* that the ninth, tenth, and eleventh

chapters of the epistle to the Romans should be inserted in the bible." How the Apostle justified himself in writing for the use of the *Romans* that which was unfit for *general use*, and so *untrue* as this account implies, we are not informed.

It may not be useless to inform the reader how Barclay can make *any* use of a book so full of corruptions, alterations, and additions. A common Christian would suppose that the whole book was at least a matter of *uncertainty;* and be ready to exclaim, "if the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" His solution of the difficulty however is easy. When a person reads the bible, the Spirit informs him, by immediate revelation, what is true and what is false. Apol. p. 82. "Wrong translations of scripture are discerned in the Spirit by the unlearned in letters."

These are all the arguments produced by Barclay, to prove that the scriptures are but a subordinate and secondary rule; and in them may be comprized all I have read or heard on that point. I now proceed to discuss the arguments sometimes adduced to prove that inspiration is still continued; or that the Spirit still supplies the place which they suppose they have proved the scriptures cannot. We have seen Barclay contending that inspiration is yet *necessary;* we shall next see him attempting to prove it is yet *continued.* We have seen his *statement* in Chap. 1. of this second part; we now will examine his *evidence.*

His *proofs* are drawn from *scripture:* his *confirmations,* from the writings of men; some of whom he intends should have the greater weight because they were not Quakers.

It will be of great use in the examination of both these testimonies and in the discussion of the whole topic, here *to define inspiration,* and distinguish it from that which this writer and many other persons confound with it. There is a great difference between *inspiration and illumination*; and *to either of them* the more general term *revelation* is sometimes applied. A man is *inspired,* when God communicates a truth to his mind; either for his own direction; or to be delivered to

others, by speech or writing, in the name of God. It is *illumination*, when God opens the eyes and the heart to truths which were before revealed; truths which the person *might* have known before, and perhaps *did* know, but not clearly and affectingly, on account of his unwillingness to obey. Moses, Isaiah, and Paul were *inspired*, when they were moved by the Holy Ghost to speak or write truths which had been kept secret from the foundation of the world. Any man is *enlightened* when he reads or hears the truths of the bible; and especially when the Spirit accompanies the word, arrests the attention, arouses the conscience, and reproves of sin. This state of mind is termed *conviction*; it is the state in which Saul was, when the commandment had come, sin had revived, and he had died. Yet, *more especially*, is a man *enlightened*, or his mind is *illuminated*, when he is born again, or is reconciled to God. Then he is turned from darkness to light; he is brought out of darkness into marvellous light; he was once darkness, but now is light in the Lord. Yet a single truth is not made known to him, which was not before contained in the scriptures. It is a lamentable fact that men in their unconverted state love darkness rather than light. They are frequently represented in scripture as being spiritually blinded. But they are wise in their own eyes: they put darkness for light, and light for darkness; the light shineth in darkness, but the darkness comprehendeth it not. Yet the *defect* was in *them*, and not in the bible. The scriptures are full of all they need to know, or ever will know, in this world, if they become Christians. But they *will not come* to the light; the veil is on their heart; and *therefore* they have no understanding, and know not the way of life. Nor is the deficiency or obstacle found in their natural powers of mind. Their mental powers are good, and sufficient for their knowing and doing the whole will of God. The obstacle lies in their *heart*—They *hate* the light, and *therefore* will not see it. They are blinded through the ignorance that is in them, be-

*cause of the hardness of their hearts.* They *can* see, but *will* not. And it has long been a true proverb, "None are so blind, as those who *will not* see." A man alienated from his neighbor can see no beauty, consistency, or excellency in him; when others can see much. Let him be cordially reconciled, and all is clear to him at once, without the least additional knowledge or information. So men are at enmity with God. They see his glory displayed in his works, and clearly revealed in his word. But they *hate* his glory; and, *because* of that enmity, do not spiritually understand the truths of his glorious gospel. Their confidence in their own understanding is also a hindrance; they say, we see, therefore their sin remaineth.

The Friends and others agree with me and with Paul that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." We differ however in explaining the *cause* of that darkness. I should say, it is not owing to the *nature of the truths revealed* and necessary to be known; they are such as the minds of men are fully capable of understanding—nor to *any defect in the light given* in the scriptures; it is clear and sufficient, like the unclouded sun in the heavens—nor to the *organs of vision*, so to speak; every man (except idiots) has understanding, reason, and conscience. But it *is* owing to *a moral defect in the heart*, for which man is wholly to blame. The other scheme maintains that there is *not light sufficient* in the scriptures; and therefore God has "exonerated himself" from blame by giving his Spirit, or a portion of his grace, to *dispose* the heart to know and obey him. I believe it is the work of the spirit to reprove us of sin by *means* of the scriptures; and when he renews the *heart*, all things become new; because the enmity of the carnal mind is slain. But in this act he, with wonderful compassion, takes away the cause of our darkness, for which we were solely to blame, by taking away our love to sin, and our unwillingness to come

to the light. Then do we know the truth, which we might have known before, but would not. Then are we in the light. When the *heart* turns, or rather is turned, to the Lord, then the veil is rent from the heart, the scales fall from the eyes, the eye is single, and the whole body is full of light. No new truth is revealed; but *every* truth is seen with new eyes, and every object wears a different aspect. God, Christ, ourselves, our fellow-men, the world, holiness, and sin, all *appear* new. The whole change is in our *own feelings of heart:* the principal characteristic of the change is, that the new-born soul sees the spiritual and moral excellency of holiness, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Such persons have, I grant, a new *evidence* of the truth of the scriptures: not because God has attested them by a fresh inspiration to them; but because they now *understand* them, receive them, love them, "eat them," and live upon them. Because they find in them such a perfect description of their own hearts, and of the characters of men: find them so accordant with nature and providence; that they are so worthy of the God of the universe; bring such a perfect remedy for their spiritual diseases; and apply it so appropriately and comfortably to their souls.

To *reveal* is to *make known*. This change of views which results from the new birth is sometimes called a revelation; or the truth is then said to be revealed to the new-born soul. The term is also applied to the communication of truth not before known, and has the same meaning as *inspiration*. As in Rom. 16. 25. "according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began." Gal. 1. 12. "For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." Any portion of scripture is a revelation from God in this last sense, something given by inspiration. One book, (the last in the bible,) is so called particularly, (Rev. 1. 1.) because it consists almost entirely of predictions of events from that time till the end of the world; God revealed them to his servant John. We

call the whole bible a revelation from God; meaning that God has made known its truths to us by inspiration. These two different kinds of revelation (by inspiration, and by "opening the understanding to understand the scriptures,") are severally represented also by other terms. But it is now apparent to the reader that they are very different things. We will therefore now show the importance of the distinction in the present discussion.

From quotations in Chap. 1. of this part it is plain that some contend for continual *inspiration* in the strictest and fullest sense of the word: and this position Barclay attempts to support by the scriptures, and quotations from human authors. The confirmation derived from human authors is removed at once by showing that they contended, not for immediate inspiration, but for the work of the Spirit in renewing the heart, in sanctifying believers through the truth, and in taking the things of Christ to shew them to them. There have been believers in Christianity, professed followers of Christ, and even ministers, who were strangers to a change of heart; who had never been brought out of darkness into light. They have therefore slighted the experience of others, and treated their pretensions as visionary. *Against these* the advocates of the truth have asserted and proved the fact. They have ascribed this illumination of the mind, (not inspiration,) to the Spirit of God, as the scriptures also do. In vindicating this gospel truth they have sometimes spoken or written rather strongly: but by no means so as to authorize the conclusion that they believed themselves or any others since the apostolic age were inspired. Barclay's and Clarkson's numerous quotations from Christian authors will therefore avail them nothing. The quotations bear not at all upon the subject. I am persuaded they might be fully answered in many cases by other quotations from the same authors, proving that they held the scriptures the primary, infallible, and only guide. But I am willing the reader should take the quotations themselves; and keeping the above distinction in

view, peruse them attentively. I am persuaded he will find only a statement of the belief of those Authors in the renewing and enlightening influence of the Spirit, by means of the scriptures.

The arguments drawn *from scripture* in favor of universal and perpetual inspiration deserve more attention.

I shall make the following arrangement of the many passages which I find quoted on the subject ; including a mention of the several mistakes into which writers have fallen.

1. When Barclay and others read or interpret scripture they do *not make* the above necessary and important *distinction* between inspiration and the illumination, which attends conversion : of course they produce as authority for the one, what belongs only to the other. I grant that, when a person is renewed, he comes out of darkness into light : that after conversion, during all their days, believers see more and more the excellency of scriptural truths, in consequence of walking with God. But all this is far short of inspiration. By such a misapplication of passages, it is easy to prove that all Christians are inspired ; whereas the sacred writers have asserted no such thing. Rom. 8. 9—14. is taken as proving inspiration. Let us view the whole passage. " But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin ; but the Spirit is life because, of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die : but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are *led* by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Here is not one word concerning *objective revelation*, or *immediate inspiration*. The whole is clearly an account

of that *light which attends regeneration.* Believers are led by the Spirit of God, because he lives in *their hearts;* and opens the understanding to behold wondrous things out of Gods' law. 1 Cor. 6. 19. is supposed to prove that Christians are inspired. But the Apostle only declares the indwelling of the Spirit as a *sanctifier.* His words are, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" To the same purpose 1 Cor. 3. 16. but not a word about inspiration. Jer. 31. 33. has been quoted for two purposes; but in my opinion it has no reference to either. "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."—It is a promise concerning "the house of Israel," or the church of God. It predicts and promises a far more general prevalence of the true religion of the heart, among God's professing people in future times, (and especially in times even *yet* future,) than had ever been known before. It promises a far more copious effusion of the sanctifying influences of the Spirit. But it neither proves that mankind are all *restored* partially to the image of God; nor that all men, or even Christians are *inspired.* See the Apostle's exposition and application of the passage in the 8th Chap. to the Hebrews. 1 John 2. 27. "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and you need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." This anointing was peculiar to them which were "of God;" and was the chief distinction between them and "the world that lieth in wickedness." It is therefore impossible it should be an evidence that *all* men are inspired, which is the opinion our opponents would support. Again, understood of *believers* only, it is perfectly consistent with the sentiment that, when they are renewed by the

Spirit, they are brought out of darkness into the light of the *scriptures.* John asserts nothing in the passage concerning inspiration. The same remarks apply to two other passages in the same epistle, on which much reliance has been placed, Chap. 4. ver. 13. "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit." Chap. 5. ver. 6. "And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth."—If men would not confound ideas together, which in their nature are exceedingly different, they would better understand the scriptures.

2. The writers in question are even so inattentive to distinctions as to make none between *inspiration,* and the common *awakening* influences of the Spirit upon the *impenitent.*

I have admitted that *where the gospel is preached or read* the holy Spirit often excites the attention of the impenitent to the reproofs and instructions of the word; and strives with them by awakening their consciences, and exciting their fears. I have shown however that this operation is totally distinct from inspiration. By confounding them together these writers have pressed several passages of scripture into their service. Barclay quotes Acts 7. 51. to prove that the universal saving light or inspiration may be resisted: whereas Stephen there only censures the *Jews* for resisting the doctrine which *he* and the other Apostles spake by the holy Ghost, and which was probably urged upon their consciences by the *enlightening* but *not inspiration* of the Spirit. In other words *Stephen* was inspired, but not his contradicting and blaspheming hearers. Clarkson quotes Ps. 81. 11, 12. and Luke 19. 42. in which passages God laments over lost sinners that would not hearken to him; and adds, "As if he had said, ye would not attend to the impressions by God's holy Spirit." Even Gen. 6. 3. cannot avail them. "The Lord said, my Spirit shall not always strive with man," i. e. mankind. But there is no evidence that he meant they were *inspired* at that period. They would not obey the warnings of inspired *Noah,* "a preacher of righteousness;" and resisted the awakening and reproving influences of the Spirit.

3. The advocates of universal inspiration do not distinguish between *inspiration* on the one hand, and *checks of conscience and naturnal understanding* on the other. There *is* however, a wide distinction. Therefore all the passages they quote which relate to the discovery of the invissible things of God by the things which are made, or to the moral sense and conscience of the heathen, have no relation to the subject. Until scripture can be produced to prove that they who have not the scriptures nor the preaching of the gospel are *inspired* like the Prophets and Apostles, the quotations will be in vain. I shall hereafter have occasion to consider the state of the heathen; and shall pursue the inquiry no farther in this place.

4. The writers in question *apply to all christians*, and indeed to *all men*, passages which in fact relate *exclusively to the Apostles or other inspired men* of those times. Under this mistake they quote Matt. 28. 19, 20. "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing &c. and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Also Gal. 1, 12, 15, 16. where Paul asserts that he received his gospel, not from man, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ; and that it pleased God to reveal his Son in him, that he might preach him among the heathen. Also Acts 6. 10. "And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he [Stephen] spake." But surely no attentive reader needs to be informed there is no allusion here to all men, or all Christians. They rely much on some passages in John 14. where Christ said, "I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth;—he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. The Comforter, which is the holy Ghost, whom the Father shall send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." These things Christ spake exclusively to his disconsolate disciples, the eleven Apostles, just before he suffered, and when he told them he was going

away. I grant he *includes* in the promise the sanctifying and comforting grace of the Spirit *to them;* and that this is common to all believers. But it is plain he had special reference to the miraculous powers the Spirit would bestow, when they should be endued with power from on high. *They* were to be *inspired;* the Spirit would bring to *their remembrance*, all things which he had *said to them.* These terms can never apply to persons of another age of the world; nor to any in *that* day who had not seen him and heard his words. In the same discourse, John 16. 7—13. he again speaks of the Comforter or Spirit "whom (says he) I will send *unto you.* And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." But he does not promise that the Spirit shall *inspire* the world, or *dwell in* the people of the world. Indeed he had said (Ch. 14.) "whom the world *cannot receive*, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but *ye* know him; for he dwelleth *with you*, and shall be *in you.*" It is probable he meant that the Spirit would reprove the world by the Apostle's doctrine and miraculous works; including perhaps his *awakening* power on their minds and consciences. Immediately after (v. 13.) he *limits* the gift of inspiration expressly to the Apostles, in distinction from the world. "He will guide *you* into all truth. He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto *you.*"

Much reliance has been placed on Acts 2. containing an account of the descent of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost; "and they were all filled with the holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." The effect was imputed to drunkenness. Peter, "standing up *with the eleven,*" repelled the charge, and said, "But this is that which was spoken by the Prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, (saith God,) I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my

servants, and on my handmaidens, I will pour out in those days of my Spirit, and they shall prophecy." I have heard this applied confidently to the visions, prophecyings, exhortations, and other wonders, of the present day. But Peter affirmed the prophecy of Joel was *then* fulfilled, on the day of Pentecost. It is certainly a later period of time now; but John calls *his* day the *last time*. This effusion of the Spirit was then confined to the believers. The multitude did not receive inspiration. The remainder of Joel's prophecy quoted by Peter relates to the wonders and sufferings which attended the destruction of Jerusalem. We may therefore conclude that the whole was accomplished in the *Apostolic age*; and that the predicted inspirations, gifts of tongues, &c. were *confined to a few* of the Jews and other nations, for the propagation and confirmation of the gospel. 1 Cor. 2. 11. is quoted to prove the point in question. Let the reader peruse the chapter, and he will find the Apostle affirms *his own* inspiration, and that of his *brethren in the ministry*; but distinguishes *himself and them* from their hearers and disciples, the Corinthian brethren. "*My* speech and *my* preaching was—in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that *your* faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." There is a passage 1 Cor. 12. 7. which they deem explicit and incontrovertible to prove that all men are inspired. "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to *every man* to profit withal." And indeed the sentence, taken separately, seems to contain a universal affirmation. We have however only to look at the *connection*, and we find the Apostle in writing on the "diversities" of "spiritual gifts," among the "Apostles, prophets, teachers, workers of miracles," &c.; and shows that the gifts which these severally possessed were all bestowed by "the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." But he affirms nothing concerning a *universal* possession of any such gifts, even in the *Church*.

Had we time to examine other passages we should find

the same mistake in the application of several more to *all men*, or at least to all *believers*, which in fact can apply only to *special messengers*, who received special gifts and qualifications.

5. There are some other passages which do not fall under any of the preceding classes, but must not pass unnoticed. Some of them are the strong holds of our opponents. The first I shall examine is John 1. 9. "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." This is considered such decisive authority, and is so frequently quoted, that Barclay allows it has acquired the name of "the quaker text." But one passage, which admits of another explanation, is not sufficient to overthrow the truth which is established by undoubted facts, and the general current of scripture. They would understand from this passage, that every man, in every place, and in every age, has a saving light from the Spirit of God, or Christ. It is not affirmed by John however, that it is a *saving* light, or *sufficient*, or given by *inspiration*. The passage admits of several different constructions, either of which is consistent with scripture and facts. It may be translated with equal propriety, "That was the true Light, which, coming into the world, enlighteneth every man." Thus rendered, the affirmation is *general*, but not so *universal* as before. In either form, it may import no more than this; that his light is *sufficient* for all; and will, *in process of time*, fill the whole earth. It no more proves that all men *are* savingly enlightened by him, than the *seventh* verse proves that all men *believe* on him. It may only mean that *whatever degree* of light men have; whether acquired by reason from the things that are made; or from the doctrines of inspiration; is primarily from him, as the creator of the earth and the heavenly luminaries, as the author of the intellectual powers of man, as well as the giver of the holy Spirit.

Another authority of great weight with them is Col. 1. 23, 27. "Be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which

ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature under heaven. —— this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of Glory." To suit the purpose better, they translate thus; "which was preached *in* every creature." There is no difficulty in the 27th verse; for he was writing to *Christians*; and it will not be denied that Christ was *in them*. The only question is, what did Paul mean, when he asserted the gospel had been "preached to every creature under heaven"? There is no assertion of a communication to any *without the usual means*. "The gospel which ye have *heard*; which was *preached*; *whereof* I, Paul, am *made a minister*;" are expressions not calculated to express a knowledge given to the people by inspiration without means. The gospel which he had preached, and the Collossians had received, was by the command of Christ, *to be* preached to every creature, to all nations; so far as his servants *had* gone, they had addressed *all men*, without exception; and they *had actually* published it *very extensively*, even through nearly the whole Roman empire; which, as it was a great part of the world then known, was sometimes called the whole world. Rom. 10. 18. with the context is another authority. The Apostle had been urging the necessity of the *preaching* of the word, in a very energetic manner; "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a *preacher*? And how shall they preach except they be sent?" Questions, one would suppose altogether unanswerable. It is commonly understood that Paul leaves them without an answer; in which case they are the strongest affirmations. Barclay however says they are "answered by the 18th verse." As if he had said, the Apostle asserts in the 18th verse, that many *have* heard *without* a preacher, by the teaching or inspiration of the holy Spirit. Paul's words are these; "But I say, have they not heard? Yes verily; their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." He quotes from the 19th Psalm, which has reference

to the knowledge of God given by the heavenly luminaries. The Apostle, alluding to the extensive preaching of the gospel already mentioned, thinks it may even be compared to the universal light of the sun and moon, which shine through all the world. Still it is manifest he means the preaching of the gospel by the Apostles and other laborers in the vineyard.

Tit. 2. 11, 12. "For the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us &c." This might better be rendered, "The grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men hath appeared." The salvation, or the atonement of Christ, is sufficient for all men: where the gospel is preached, it is proposed to all persons, of every description; and the day will come, when that which had then appeared *in the world*, will be made known to all men, over all the earth. As it stands, the passage may mean no more than that the grace of God brings salvation to *all descriptions* of men.

It is admitted that *Job* was taught of God, without having full access to the oracles of God previously given, so far as we know. But it is the case of an individual; one whose situation is not fully known to us; and yet the account of him is given by an inspired writer, and makes part of the canon of scripture. His case therefore can not be considered as evidence that *any* others, much less that *all* others, are inspired, who have not heard of salvation by the appointed means. Cornelius is still farther from being a proper witness in this case. He was a Gentile; but at the time Peter was sent to him was a resident in Judea; where he had had access, (for how long a time we know not,) to the Jewish scriptures, and the promises of a Messiah. These means were *blessed* to him, and excited his desires to know the way of God more perfectly. But if he had been *inspired*, it would seem unnecessary for him to have sent for the Apostle.

We have now examined the usual arguments for the infer-

ority and insufficiency of the scriptures as a guide; and for perpetual and universal light by inspiration. The reader will judge for himself which must bear the greater weight; the arguments themselves, or the attempt we have made to refute them.

## CHAP. IV.

### WHAT IS SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE THAT A MAN IS INSPIRED, TO SATISFY *HIMSELF*; TO CONVINCE *OTHERS*; AND TO ACCREDIT HIS MESSAGE WITH *SUCCEEDING GENERATIONS*? ALL NECESSARY EVIDENCE FOR THE INSPIRATION OF THE SACRED WRITERS.

Man is a rational being. God has formed him so; and treats him accordingly in all his dispensations. As such he considers *himself*; and requires *evidence* of truth in every thing which demands his belief, or claims his obedience. Rome indeed adopted the maxim, "Ignorance is the mother of devotion;" but the event proved it is rather the parent of superstition. It has also frequently produced fanaticism; but never that pure and undefiled religion, which is worthy of rational creatures, and which God requires as a reasonable service. The attempt to find out God unto perfection, it is true, is too presumptuous for man; who must be, however wise, comparatively a fool before Jehovah. Yet God addresses himself to us according to our nature and rank; and will not require of us the annihilation, suppression, or disuse of the intellectual powers which himself formed. Had we known nothing already of special revelations, we might not be competent to determine *how* God would make himself known to us; *what kind and degree* of evidence he would furnish that it was *he* who spake, and not another. But it is admitted by my opponents that the scriptures are true, and were written by inspired men. I may therefore examine the *manner* in which God *has* communicated his will; the *evidence* he *has* given us, both as to its kind and degree; the

*coincidence* of his methods with what right reason suggests or approves; and the *evidence for other* supposed revelations, as *compared with this and with reason.*

In the discussion of the question of evidence, the distinctions made at the head of this chapter are important. I may have the most convincing evidence to my own mind that God has made to me a special communication; but my neighbour may be ignorant of that evidence, and may be incapable of perceiving it in the manner I have done. He would not therefore act rationally to *receive* the revelation, unless he is furnished with *other* evidence, than that which satisfies me. Again, by divine aid, I may furnish the evidence necessary to convince a person to whom I have access; and yet other evidence still would be necessary to prove to persons in distant places, or in succeeding generations, that I am inspired. The two last situations being *similar* to each other, and requiring in part the same kinds of testimony, are both included in one division at the head of the chapter.

## SECTION I.

*Of the evidence necessary to convince a person that he is himself moved by the holy Ghost, or inspired; or has received a special revelation from God.*

Guided by reason and scripture facts, perhaps we may establish certain *maxims* on the subject before us.

1. If God make special communications to men, it will be in a manner *adapted to their rational powers.* This we infer both from the divine wisdom and goodness, and from the capacities and necessities of men. Designing to impart real light or knowledge, he will not adopt the dark, ambiguous, unmeaning manner of the heathen oracles. He may leave something unexplained for humble inquiry, and filial faith: but he will consider his rational offspring as having understanding superior to the beasts of the field and the fowls of heaven. The communications to the sacred writers were explicit; and such as were adapted to rational beings.

2. The manner and subject of his communications will be *worthy of himself.* There will be nothing trifling, mean, deceptive, sensual, immoral, or profane, in the revelation itself, or the circumstances attending its delivery. Simplicity will not exclude sublimity; condescension will not degenerate into familiarity; and, while God talks with man as with a friend, he will still be known as the holy One of Israel. *Thus* God spake by the Prophets and Apostles.

3. The communication will be *supernatural.* Whatever may be traced to second causes, as occurring according to the course of nature, may (even if it be uncommon,) have no more of the divine agency than is continually employed; and therefore cannot mark out a special divine interposition. God therefore, to manifest his presence and agency, to evince that *he* is addressing man, will perform some act which is superior to the power of his creatures; out of his own ordinary course; and stamped with the impress of his own hand. Something supernatural may be expected, whether the communication be made directly to the mind, or through the medium of the senses. This method God has uniformly adopted.

4. It may be expected that God will *address evidence to our senses* in some cases; though he will not probably *confine* himself to that method. It is not denied but God *can* convey truth by special revelation to the *mind* immediately; which is properly termed inspiration. But we dwell in the body. We obtain the originals of all our ideas through the medium of the bodily senses. Those facts, which are proved to us by evidence of this kind, are in the affairs of this life more firmly believed than others. There is reason therefore to suppose God will not neglect such an important method of producing evidence to the mind in making his special communications. Accordingly some have had *visible* representations, and received evidence through the medium of the *eye.* Of this kind was the appearance of *angels* to Abraham, Lot, Manoah and his wife, Jacob, Mary the mother of Jesus, Pe-

ter in the prison, and many others. Of this kind was the appearance of Deity incarnate, the Word anticipating his tabernacling in the flesh, who spake personally with Abraham, Moses, Joshua, and others. Of this kind were the supernatural appearances of a burning yet unconsumed bush to Moses; the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire to the Israelites; the various representations made to the eye of Ezekiel; and many others. Some have had *audible* communications. Those who *saw* Christ before his birth of Mary, or any of his angels, usually also *heard* them speak. God "talked with Moses." John Baptist heard a voice from heaven, after he had baptized Jesus, saying "this is my beloved Son." The Lord called Samuel as he lodged in the temple. And Peter heard a voice from the excellent glory, when he was with his Lord in the holy mount.

Something similar to sensible evidence is given, when a person seems to see and hear *in sleep*. God has used this method; still stamping the scene as supernatural; and bringing it distinctly to remembrance when the person is raised from sleep. Witness Jacob's vision of the ladder; the dreams of Joseph, son of Jacob; and the warnings given to Joseph, the husband of Mary, concerning the safety of the Redeemer of the world. Trances, visions, or ecstacies, are not perhaps very dissimilar to dreams. Either of these is not a state of sleep; but the mind is abstracted from all corporeal objects, raised above common sensations and reflections, and fixed on those objects which are presented to it by the immediate act of God, or some invisible agent. Of this nature were some of the communications made to Ezekiel, to John in the isle of Patmos, and to Paul when he was caught up to the third heavens, and heard unutterable words, and could scarcely tell whether he was in the body or out of it. In such cases, (so far as I can form an idea of the subject,) objects are presented to the mental sight as distinctly as material objects are to our eyes; and sounds or voices are distinctly heard. But whether the corporeal eye and ear are mediums of com-

munication or not, "I cannot tell;" and I even doubt whether Paul and others could, in every instance. In all these cases the manner of the revelation is supernatural; and in some of them the senses are employed.

The term *inspiration* perhaps should be exclusively applied to immediate suggestions to the mind: but they who receive messages by an audible voice from heaven are not less favored with special divine communications.

5. Whatever method God uses, he will give *certain* evidence; such as shall leave *no doubt* on the mind of the person receiving the revelation. Uncommon, præternatural, and even supernatural, appearances have abounded in the world; many of them have proved not to be from God. Great caution therefore is necessary in examining any thing of the kind. God will give clear evidence, where he speaks; but *counterfeits* of his manner may exist. A prophet was doubtless at liberty to inquire accurately whether his senses were not deceived, when he saw a sight, or heard a voice, which he had supposed to be from God: or to ascertain whether his dream by night was not one of those which are common with men, and which come from sorrow, anxiety, "the multitude of business," or some pleasing object which had engrossed his waking thoughts and feelings. If he had "fallen into a trance," and was recovered to his ordinary state, he was at liberty to review the scene, and examine whether it were not the effect of disease, mental agitation, a glow of imagination, or the work of evil spirits. If he supposed he had received a revelation by the immediate agency of the Spirit suggesting ideas to his mind, without external signs, without dream or vision; still there is room for examination. The human mind, *without* special divine agency, has a great variety of operations; and is subject to the influence of spirits good and bad. Who shall assure him that some *unusual* thought or impression he has, is not the result of his own indefinitely various reasonings and reflections; or from the influence of an invisible agent of hell, transformed

into an angel of light? The operations of God's Spirit by suggestions to the mind, and of inferior spirits also, are perhaps *insensible*. For I believe no *ordinary* person was ever conscious of *receiving* an idea, suggested internally by a spirit (clothed as all our ideas are in words) until he himself *thought* the same. The aid believers receive from the Comforter; and the assistance ministers find in preaching and prayer from the Spirit of Christ, are all given in such intimate connection with the common operations of our minds, that we know not the presence or aid of the spirit, except by the *effects*. Our thoughts occur to us in the usual manner; and we know only by the superior effects that he who "helpeth our infirmities" is there. The suggestions of the adversary to believers follow the same rule. Whether the special influence of the Spirit on a person *inspired* was not of a different description as to *manner*, I know not. It is probable there was a certain *afflatus*, by which the presence and operation of the Spirit was always and certainly known. To me this is probable; because I see so great a liability to deception without it; and because the wisdom and goodness of God seem to give a pledge that every communication he makes will be *rendered certain* to him that receives it; especially if he is sent to *other* persons with an authoritative message from Jehovah. *What* that particular manner of the Spirit *was*, I know not that inspired persons have ever informed us. And probably uninspired men, who have not *experienced* the same thing of course, could not understand them, if they had attempted it.

The Spirit appears to have adopted the method of suggesting truths immediately to the minds of the divine messengers, as his most usual method; more frequent than visions, or dreams, or external appearances and voices. The latter however were frequently employed; God using *various* methods, to render the faith of his prophets the more secure; and in some instances confirming it by the use of *several methods at the same time*.

I shall however grant that an internal suggestion of the Spirit *alone*, *without* any use of sensible evidence, was sufficient to an inspired person's own satisfaction, when stamped with the seal of Jehovah. Yet from this it will not follow that a man cannot be deceived in supposing himself inspired. God, where he *does* inspire a man, will give him evidence of the fact. But another person may supose *he* also has the same inspiration, and the same evidence of it, and yet deceive himself. A man with good eyes knows that he has correct notions of colours and figures. Blind persons usually form *some* ideas of colors, figures, and the features of their friends; and they may *suppose* they are very correct. But perhaps if their eyes were opened, they would not distinguish their friends from strangers; and certainly would not find that "the scarlet color is like the sound of a drum," as one of them once observed. One in a *dream* believes he eats; but he awakes and his soul is empty. A *waking* man *knows* when he eats, and when he is hungry. A christian may *know* that he is passed from death unto life. An impenitent sinner may have a firm persuasion that *he* is also. The difference of the two cases is, that the one has evidence which the other wants; the latter has only the *semblance*, which to *him* appears reality.

This view of the subject is given by Barclay. He is a strong advocate for the certain evidence which all inspired persons have that they *are* inspired. Yet he allows that men may be deceived in supposing they are inspired, and that the Anabaptists and others *had* been deceived. I see no inconsistency in his statements on the subject. I believe that where God does reveal truth to a Prophet, he will in some way *assure* him that *God* has done it. Yet a person who *has not* a revelation may *imagine* that he has; may think he is *sure* of the fact; and yet be totally under a mistake. We shall hereafter find however it is of some importance that *Barclay* has given such an opinion.

The sacred writers seem to have been fully persuaded in their own minds that they were moved by the holy Ghost.

They spake and wrote with authority, and in the name of God. They "fought not uncertainly, nor as beating the air." They knew they did "not follow cunningly devised fables." They received "the word from the mouth of God, and gave men warning from him." It is evident they were not inspired at all times: yet they appear to have had no doubt *when* the word of the Lord came to them. I recollect no exception to this remark, only the instance of Paul, who uses several expressions in the 7th Chap. of 1 Cor. and again in 8th and 11th of 2 Cor. which seem to imply a *doubt* whether he was inspired at those times. Concerning this it may be remarked, that he at least *knew* when the influence was *suspended*, and when *renewed*; and *gave notice* to his readers. And this is a full proof of his being inspired *at all other times* when writing his epistles, and that he always had had certain evidence when the Spirit *was* upon him. But there is no evidence that inspiration was properly suspended in the instances here mentioned. On those in the 7th chap. the observations of Mr. Scott appear satisfactory. "Sometimes he spake by way of *permission* concerning what was *allowable*; sometimes by way of *counsel*, concerning what was *advisable*; and at other times [i. e. in this chapter, as *always* when he did not limit his remarks,] by *commandment*, concerning what was *absolutely binding* on their consciences. But in *all* this he might be, and doubtless was, guided by the Spirit of inspiration." The instance 2 Cor. 8. 8, 10. "I speak not by commandment—herein I give my advice," is easily explained. He did not *command* the Corinthians how much to give for the poor saints, or even to give at all, in that case: but informed them of the liberality of other and poorer churches; reminded them of the grace of the Lord Jesus, who, though he was rich became poor for their sakes; and gave his *advice*. No doubt also it was *the Lord's* advice. In the 11th chap. he vindicated his character from the calumnies of his his enemies, and recounted his labors and sufferings. This he spake "not after the Lord but as it were foolishly."

It was not what God would have directed him to do, without the necessity by which his enemies had "compelled" him. To "boast" was not *his* manner, nor that of *the Lord*; but the manner of *fools*. In this case it was necessary; and he was unquestionably moved by the holy Ghost to do it. Still how *different* was his boasting ftom theirs! They gloried in "appearances." He gloried in his "infirmities, that the power of Christ might rest on him," and that God might be glorified in him.

## SECTION 2.

*Of the evidence necessary to be produced by a divine messenger, for the conviction of those to whom he is sent.*

God may communicate truth to a person for *his* benefit alone: and instances of this kind have not been wanting. It has however been the divine plan usually to commission the person receiving it *to deliver it to others* in his name. Moses was sent to his brethren in Egypt, and to Pharaoh, with messages in the name of Jehovah. In the same manner were the prophets sent to God's professing people at many times. The credentials, necessary for such messengers to produce, are the subject of present inquiry.

A man may be rapt to the third heavens, and other persons be ignorant of the fact. He may have seen a vision, or heard a voice, or in some way received a revelation with the fullest evidence to his own mind; but all others know nothing concerning it. They may not have been present, to observe the external testimonies. Even in their presence, the revelation may have been made to his *mind*, without evidence to his senses. Suppose he delivers a message to them, as from God; informs them he received it from God, and declares the manner of its delivery and the evidence *he* has of the fact. If they receive it, they rely wholly upon *his* word; they have at the best, but human testimony. But in a case so important as a message from the God of our life, concerning himself, or relating to our own eternal welfare, it seems but slender ground to rely solely on the testimony of a single fallible

man. He may be a *stranger*; one with whose character his hearers are not acquainted. In such case they are liable to great imposition, if they credit his declaration alone. If they have known him, and have found him a man of veracity; yet his veracity *may* fail; and how can they put their souls for life or death upon the confidence that *any* man's veracity *cannot* fail. Let God be true; but every man a liar. Let me *know* that God speaks a promise that applies to me, and I have an anchor to my soul. Again, the supposed messenger to others may have been himself deceived, if he reports only a manifestation made internally to his mind. The strongest advocate of continual and infallible inspiration has expressly said, they who have it not may verily *think* they have. How do the hearers know, in any given case, but he who comes with a message is not himself under a mistake? He is a man of truth; he sincerely believes he "hath a revelation"; but if he be himself deceived, he will deceive all who embrace his message. His assertion alone, however sincere they may believe him, is not sufficient evidence to accredit him as a special messenger of the Lord of hosts. The reasons assigned for the necessity of evidence to the person receiving an immediate revelation to himself, are equally applicable here; and induce us to believe God will afford stronger testimony than this, when he sends one man as a special messenger to others. And he *has* given stronger. He has never required men to believe without good evidence. He has warned them against credulity.

Perhaps the following rules will apply in this case.

1. When several persons have been *witnesses* of the facts which satisfy the messenger himself, *they* may receive the message from him without farther testimony. When the Israelites at the foot of the mount saw and heard the wonders exhibited there, they were authorized and required to regard Moses as a messenger from God when he came down to them. When the multitude on the day of pentecost heard the disciples speaking different languages which they had not learned,

they had the same evidence of the descent of the holy Spirit on the disciples which they had themselves. This cannot be the case where the revelation is attended with no external evidence, and is made immediately and secretly to the mind, or when the inspired person is alone.

2. If a person *has once been accredited* as a messenger from God by sufficient evidence, he may *afterward* be received in some cases without repeatedly producing his credentials. Moses, having wrought miracles when he was first sent to his brethren; and being known as a man of truth, and with whom God conversed, needed not to perform a fresh miracle on every occasion of delivering a new message from God, which he frequently received. Especially, when his first introduction to them was by way of commission as their leader, to bring them out of Egypt, and to *continue* going before them in the name of God. Neither Christ nor his Apostles wrought miracles on *every occasion* of their addressing the people in the name of God. Paul, being well known already as an inspired Apostle could write letters to different churches in his Lord's name, and clothed with his authority, without giving any *new* evidence of his divine commission. It will be observed that this rule has no reference to the *first introduction* of a messenger.

3. Satisfactory evidence may be obtained from *the testimony of others;* provided they have been *witnesses* of facts. Let us suppose a Jew, in our Lord's time, had never seen him, nor witnessed any of his mighty works; but scores, perhaps hundreds of his friends and countrymen agree in testifying that they have seen and heard; have witnessed deeds indisputably wrought, and altogether beyond the power of men, and out of the common course of nature. He would be authorized to believe that this was "a man sent from God;" and would be unreasonable to withhold his assent. He would be bound to receive his doctrine, whenever he *had* opportunity to hear it, *without* himself witnessing any miracle. *In this way,* evidence may be given, and the messages of God circulated, to persons and places beyond the sphere of a prophet's or apostle's personal ministry.

4. A messenger from God may be accredited by *a previous prophecy.* When one messenger has spoken of another to come after him ; has described his character, and office, and the time and manner of his appearance ; the messenger who follows, and who fulfils the prediction, may be deemed worthy of credit solely from the coincidence of facts with the prophecy. John Baptist seems to have come to the Jews in this way, and to have been received. For aught that appears the remark of the Jews, John 10. 41, was true, "John did no miracle." His mission had been predicted by Malachi and others long before : his office was very peculiar, and his predicted appearance not easily mistaken. He brought no new revelation of consequence ; but was sent to call them to repent and prepare to receive the Messiah, of whom Moses and the prophets did write. There was therefore no *need* that mighty works should be wrought by him ; and God saw fit to try his professing people at that time rather by exhortations and warnings, than by signs and wonders. He would give them an opportunity of manifesting their disposition *readily* to receive their Redeemer, if they would.

In other instances, particularly that of our Lord himself, previous predictions are fulfilled in a divine messenger, and yet he *confirms* his testimony by mighty works. Of him almost every prophet had written ; and some of them at great length ; yet his miraculous works were almost without number—to leave every unbeliever utterly without excuse.

Still we must recur to the evidence to be given in the *first instance ;* when a person goes forth in the name of Jehovah. Except (as in the first rule) a person have the same external evidence with the messenger himself, I know not how he is to receive satisfactory evidence, unless the messenger *perform a miracle.* If the hearers *have* witnessed the revelation made to the messenger, they *have seen* a miracle ; if *not*, he must *perform* one ; so that we obtain.

5. This *general* rule ; That every divine messenger, sent to his fellow-men must work a miracle "for a testimony un-

to them:" otherwise they are not required to believe and obey. In proof of this assertion, let the following things be considered: viz. the *necessity* of some special token of God's presence and authority; the *fact* that God *has* employed this method; and the common *acknowledgement* of all, that miracles are the test of a person's having authority from God.

Miracles are *necessary*. Much of the reasoning in the first section will apply here. God will not require rational creatures to believe without evidence, and such evidence as marks the special presence of his own hand. The simple word of the messenger is only human testimony. Events occurring in the providence of God, but by the natural and regular operation of second causes, manifest a divine control; but do not testify a special divine interposition. But when, at the word of his servant, the course of nature is arrested, suspended, or reversed; when an evident effect is produced entirely above human power, and both without and against the operation of natural causes; it is evident God is there in a special manner. It may be concluded such an act of God is not idle and unmeaning; but is wrought for some wise and good purpose. If it be wrought at the word, or accompanying an action of a mortal like ourselves, we may conclude God is with him of a truth. *Then*, if he deliver us a message, in the name of Jehovah, we may not receive it "as the word of man," but may conclude "it is in truth the word of the living God." Our "faith standeth not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

Miracles, to be indisputable, must possess the following characteristics. They must be evidently above human power and skill; contrary to the usual course of nature; wrought openly, subject to the scrutiny of observers; on subjects lying within the knowledge and observation of spectators. There must be no room to doubt the work is indeed wrought; wrought without means, or by those which have no tendency or power in the ordinary course of events to produce the effect; and it must be evident the effect is immediate and com-

plete. If *such* miracles are wrought, at the word of a man of veracity, who declares he has received a revelation from the same source whence he derived the power of performing mighty works, I need not hesitate to receive one as an evidence of the other; believing that his message is from God, as I am convinced his miraculous powers must be from him alone. If such miracles accompany the declaration of truths which are in themselves both rational, necessary for man, and worthy of God, the evidence is strengthened. Those apparent miracles are more likely to be genuine, (independent of examination) which are wrought to establish a holy religion against the prevailing errors, corruptions, prejudices, and superstitions of men; than those which fall in with a religion already established, and which are adapted to cherish and gratify men's previous opinions, feelings, and practices.

But why are miracles necessary to prove a divine commission, and special revelation? Because nothing else is sufficient evidence of a *special* interposition of God. Men may be convinced *without* miracles that a pretender is very *sincere*; but not, that he is free from a *mistake* in the case. Rational men will not be convinced, that a man is sent from God to them with a special message, when he does not "work the works of God" to confirm it. We must be allowed to reject every *new* revelation, *beyond* the scriptures, until it is thus attested, and stamped with the broad seal of heaven.

We have said this statement coincides with *fact*: God *has uniformly adopted* this method. Perhaps it cannot be shown that God has *ever* sent a special messenger, with a new distinct revelation, without enabling him to work a miracle for a testimony to the hearers. That Moses, the first writer of scripture, and the Jewish Legislator, gave this testimony; both to Pharoah, to the Jews, and to other people, will not be disputed. The Lord was with Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, Ezekiel, Daniel, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, in the same manner. That Christ and his Apostles all wrought miracles, is a familiar fact to every child who reads the bible. It is worthy of

observation that when he sent out his twelve disciples into the cities of Judah, during his own life and ministry, he bade them preach, saying the kingdom of heaven is at hand," and added, "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils." The same commission was afterwards given to the seventy whom he sent out in like manner; and renewed to the twelve when he bade them go and teach all nations, just before he ascended to glory. And they went forth, and preached, "the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." Into whatever city or place these first heralds of the cross entered, whether among Jews or Gentiles, they usually wrought some mighty work for the confirmation of their message. So common were the miracles of Christ that vast multitudes flocked together to witness them wherever he went. They were so open, and public, and evident beyond contradiction, that his bitterest enemies could not deny them. They ascribed them to a confederacy with Beelzebub; they attempted to criminate and condemn him for violating the sabbath, when he wrought them on that day; they used every possible exertion to discredit him with the people, and even to hinder him in his work. But they did not deny *facts*; They *could* not deny them; when they consulted together to destroy him, they *acknowledged* facts, saying, "What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him." Presumptuous men. Did they not know, that there is no work, nor counsel, nor might against the Lord? So public and undeniable were our Lord's miracles, that Peter could confront a host of his murderers, and say, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, *as ye yourselves also know.*" The same testimony of enemies appears in favor of the Apostles' miracles after the assension. When the rulers had arraigned Peter and John, they conferred among themselves, saying, What shall we do

to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them, is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; *and we cannot deny it.*"

Our Lord not only wrought many miracles, but frequently *appealed* to them as evidence that he came forth from God, and that his doctrines were true. If ever a divine messenger should have been received without working miracles, *he* must have been. He was the subject of prophecy above all others; a prodigy at the time of his birth; from his childhood perfectly sinless, and eminently wise; and when he taught, never man spake like him. Still he wrought miracles. He referred the Jews to the testimony of John respecting him; but added, "I have greater witness than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." Again, John 10. 37, 38. "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me believe the works." As if he had said, 'though ye believe me not on my word alone; yet admit that I speak the truth, when ye see it confirmed by mighty works.' Finally, when John sent two of his disciples, to inquire whether he was the expected Messiah or not, he gave no direct answer; but bade them report to their master the miracles they had witnessed, as a sufficient reply to his question.

Thus it appears that God has *generally* empowered *special* messengers to work *miracles* as a proof that they were sent from him. I readily admit that we have not a distinct account of such miracles in every instance: as in the case of some of the Prophets whose writings are preserved. But when we know it was the *usual* method, and that Christ and other messengers considered miracles of the utmost importance for the confirmation of their messages; we may safely infer that the remainder produced the same credentials. In proof of this remark, many quotations might be made from scripture. However as it is a truth that will not probably be

disputed, it may be sufficient, (in addition to the remarks already made,) if we examine the law or general direction on the subject which God established for the Israelites before they entered Canaan. It is found Deut. 18. 20—22. Moses, in Jehovah's name, had predicted the coming of a Prophet like unto himself; a promise, eminently fulfilled in Christ; a promise, which also *included a succession* of true prophets till the times of the Messiah, as many expositors suppose. God then required magistrates to punish *false* prophets by death, saying, "But the Prophet which shall presume to speak a word in my name which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die." Still there remained a difficulty—the same which is the object of inquiry in this work—*how should the people know* whom he *had* commanded to speak, and whom he had *not* commanded? There were two cases where pretensions were false. One was, when a prophet should speak in the "name of *other gods*"; and the evidence in such case would be clear; his very message or speech itself would expose him, and out of his own mouth might they condemn him. But how could they ascertain the truth, when a man came falsely in the name of *the Lord?* ver. 21. "And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we *know* the word which the Lord hath not spoken?" He gives the rule, ver. 22. "When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously; thou shalt not be afraid of him." If the thing spoken by the prophet follow, he is a true prophet; if it follow not, his pretensions are false. This is the divine rule. It may be supposed the rule refers to future *events predicted*; and not *miracles*, which are works to be wrought immediately at the prophets' command. But it is evident that in this sense, the rule could be of no use to a prophet's contemporaries. If predictions be meant, they could be such only as would *soon* be fulfilled, if

true—like the judgments denounced by Moses on Pharaoh. In such case, the people would soon see whether the thing spoken "followed" or not; and of course, whether the prophet were from the Lord, or only a pretender and deceiver. This speedy fulfilment of a prediction would be *similar* to a miracle. Moreover, I see no reason to doubt but the passage may *include* proper miracles, if indeed it be not *confined* to them.

We arrive therefore to this general conclusion, that miracles are necessary evidence to prove to his fellow-men that a messenger is sent from God, on a *special* commission, and with a new revelation. The only exception is when he has been clearly and fully *predicted* by previous messengers; and the coincidence between his appearance and the prediction is so great, that there is no room for mistake. With this exception, we feel safe in asserting the universal necessity of miracles to accredit special messengers with their hearers. It appears to be Jehovah's invariable method.

Perhaps it may add something to this evidence to remark that miracles are necessary in this case by the *common acknowledgement* of all who have any acquaintance with scripture revelations; not only among the numerous sects who make the bible their standard, but among those who go beyond the word of the Lord. They who believe the bible to be sufficient, know its truths have the evidence of miracles. Seeing modern pretenders cannot produce this seal, they reject them. But pretenders also admit the necessity of miracles, in a great degree. Mahomet (who had access to the scriptures,) did not indeed pretend openly to work miracles; he knew, if he put his pretensions to that test, his imposture would be detected. But he well knew their importance, and betrayed great anxiety to satisfy his opposers that there were particular reasons why God withheld that testimony in his case; while he pretended to have witnessed and wrought mighty works *in retirement*. The Catholics adopt the same principle. Having *added* to the bible, as well as taken from

it, they pretend the sanction of miracles for their additions. With the aid of authority and deception on the part of the priests, and ignorance, and credulity on the part of the people, miracles are really supposed to be wrought among them to this day. But they have never endured the light of protestant investigation. The French prophets a modern set of enthusiasts, verily believed they were inspired; and that they *should* work miracles. They made attempts. But mad as they were, it has been remarked, they were not mad enough to believe they *had* wrought them, against the evidence of their senses Some other visionaries have made the same pretensions. It is not found that they have ever been pretended by way of introducing any of the numerous systems of paganism. The founders of these have either not imagined such a method of proof, (being ignorant of God's method;) or they have at once been conscious it was beyond their power. They have indeed had *oracles and prodigies;* but usually in aid of a system already established, so as to fall in with all the feelings and prejudices of the people; and being also unintelligible, equivocal, or false. But when all rational believers receive no message without a miracle; and while so many pretenders admit their importance, or necessity, the concession of the latter may well be considered as having some weight in this discussion. We do not say that *all* who pretend they are inspired in our day, *also* pretend *to work miracles.* But all we have named above have made the pretension, and some others. We do not say they *have* wrought evident miracles: they have most evidently *failed* to do it. But their pretensions prove their conviction of the necessity of such an evidence.

Add to this that the false Messiahs who arose according to our Lord's prediction, showed signs and wonders, insomuch that if it had been possible, they would have deceived the very elect. Now satan is too wise to adopt methods which are not suited to his purpose. It has been his method very frequently to oppose Jehovah by *forming some resemblance* of

God's works and ways; and impose it upon the unwary, for genuine. He would not pretend to work miracles, or persuade men to attempt it in his service, if he did not know their vast importance in the economy of God.

His attempts to impose the shadow of miracles on men, in support of falshood, prove that real miracles are a necessary evidence for the truth; as the circulation of counterfeit money proves that great value is ascribed to that which is genuine. Yet satan's works are works of darkness: and those of God are light and truth.

## SECTION 3.

Of the evidence necessary to prove a revelation to persons in *distant places, or future generations.*

We now come to inquire how people in other countries, or subsequent ages, may have sufficient evidence that God has spoken, without hearing the messenger in person, or witnessing his miracles. The latter is precisely our situation in regard to the sacred writers. And I expect to show that we have evidence perfectly conclusive of their being sent of God. Though not one of us is himself inspired; though no one of us ever witnessed a miracle, or heard a voice from heaven; yet we have evidence equally satisfactory: yea we have a more sure word than Peter had in the holy mount, unto which we do well to take heed, while we avoid cunningly-devised fables.

That a revelation may be communicated to a distant people; it is necessary

1. That both the message, and an account of the miracles which substantiate it, should be transmitted to them correctly, either by verbal accounts or writing. The doctrine and miracles of Christ were made known to many in distant places, both in his own time and after his ascension. This was often done by speakers who had not miraculous powers; by common believers; by persons who were not converts to his religion, but who gave their rational assent to the truth; and

even by enemies. Probably some accounts were also circulated by letters, besides those of the inspired Apostles.

That future generations may be benefitted by a revelation, it is necessary that a correct account both of the revelation or doctrine, and of the miracles which proved it, should be transmitted to them. Partial, uncertain accounts may be transmitted orally from father to son, for successive ages. Correct and full accounts may be transmitted down, by writing and printing. This has been done in the case of the revelations God *has* made. They were mostly penned at, or soon after, the time they were given. The writers were inspired to give correct and sufficient accounts. In some instances the *revelation itself* was *first* communicated to the people in writing; as some of the prophecies, the epistles, and the revelation to John; and copies of this are preserved to our day. In one instance, the giving of the law to Moses, the writing was made by the finger of God. In other cases, men were inspired to write, for the benefit of their contemporaries and of posterity, accounts of revelations previously made, and of the evidence of miracles by which they had been attested. Thus the four evangelists recorded the doctrines and miracles of our Lord; and Luke, those of the Apostles.

Many of the sacred *writers* gave sufficient evidence of their inspiration; for they *themselves* were *workers of miracles*; such were Moses, Matthew, John, Paul, Peter and James. Other sacred writers wrought no miracles; but were men of veracity; and when they recorded *facts*, of which they had been eye and ear witnesses, and which were also publicly known to great multitudes, they were entitled to credit. And besides this most of them have the testimony of the spirit of prophecy to their inspiration; in other words they wrote *predictions*, which have been fulfilling in every age of the world since.

So much concerning the penmen of the scriptures, and of their accounts as originally written. These have been trans-

lated into other languages, and numerous copies handed down to our day. Of the correctness of our present copies from those originally written, we have already remarked something, Chap. 3. of this part. It is unnecessary to enlarge on that subject.

I also pass over many things which have often been properly and unanswerably urged to prove that the sacred writers were men of truth. Satisfied that, while they *claimed* divine authority, on the ground they did, of miracles wrought before all men ; their claim would not have been admitted in their own days, if those things had not been so. Recollecting also that my opponents in general admit, that we have faithful accounts in the scriptures. But

2. To us who have seen no miracle the accumulated evidence which exists in favor of the sacred writers would not be sufficient, *if they contradicted* the general current of profane history ; or were at war with the geography of the world, with the visible creation, with the usual course of divine providence, with what we know of the state of man, and with the little which reason teaches us of God. If there were a manifest contradiction on one or several of these points, it might at least weaken our faith in the sacred word. But the fact is very different from this. Excepting some trivial disagreements, which can usually be solved with ease, there is a most striking and wonderful *harmony* and *coincidence* between the scriptures and all the subjects above named. And this circumstance is a strong confirmation of their truth.

3. If revelations are given in different ages, *they must harmonize together*. God will not contradict himself ; he is in one mind, and none can turn him. It is granted God may, as to ordinances, and outward dispensations, and things of a similar kind, abolish what he at a former time instituted. A revelation at one period may be a fulfilment, an enlargement, or a confirmation, of one which had preceded it. But if two given at different times be contradictory, one or both must

be false. God revealed truth at different periods during more than fifteen hundred years; but there was a perfect agreement among all his messengers; and they all thus mutually testified of each other, that they were sent of God. Christ, for instance, clothed the words of Moses with fresh authority; and Moses had long before testified of Christ. We have said, some deny the authority of some portions of the bible, but admit others. But nothing can be more certain than this, that the whole must stand or fall together. The *historical* relations of the *Evangelists* cannot be true, unless the *Old Testament history* be true also. The doctrinal and didactic portions imply the truth each of the other; and presuppose the truth of the historical. The prophets all wrote precisely as if the histories were undoubted; and most forcibly inculcate the warnings and precepts, and accurately harmonize with the doctrines. The Evangelists and Apostles, and particularly our blessed Lord, very frequently referred to the Old Testament; and spoke of the writers as inspired, as moved by the holy Ghost, and as having delivered the word of God. It is known that the writings of the Old Testament had been classed under three divisions by the Jews to be read in the synagogue. Christ sanctions the whole in one sentence, Luke 24. 44. "All things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me." What could Paul mean by the "scripture," but the sacred writings of the old testament; when the new was not penned?—Yet he says, 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17. "*All scripture* is given by *inspiration* of God; and is *profitable* for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thorougly furnished unto all good works." Thus every new messenger confirmed the testimony of those who went before him; and yet the *last* wrought miracles to confirm his mission. And thus, though God has ceased for seventeen hundred years to send his prophets and messengers; yet we have indisputable memorials of their doctrines

and mighty works ; and may hear them all as with one voice both glorifying God, and declaring his will to man.

We have before mentioned the fulfilment of prophecy, as an evidence of the inspiration of the prophets, and of the writers of the sacred books, in which prophecies are found. This evidence is clear, in case the predictions have been fulfilled *before* our own day, and we have authentic accounts of the events which fulfilled them from uninspired historians. And here the evidence is peculiarly strong, if the events which tally with prophecy are recorded by historians adverse to the scriptures. This has often been the case ; and is one of the methods in which the bible is aided by its enemies. We now shall notice,

4. *Prophecies of ancient date fulfilled in our own day, and before our eyes.* Several such are now fulfilling. We depend not on historians for evidence ; we know the facts ourselves. As God alone can foresee and predict ; we have here a demonstration of the truth of his word. This is equivalent to a miracle before our eyes. I dare not say that this evidence is *necessary* to assure me of the truth of a revelation made in former ages, and commending itself to my understanding with the evidence before considered. But this last is a *confirmation* which God has been pleased to give us.

There are many other proofs which we actually *have* ; and they still more strengthen and confirm our faith. But we pass over them ; having noticed sufficient, and more than sufficient, by which the sacred writers all commend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. We have seen what evidence reason requires, and what God has granted, in the case of the person receiving a special revelation from God—in the case of those to whom he personally declares his message—and in the case of others in distant places and subsequent ages. The reader may be ready to ask what bearing has this long discussion upon the principal subject of inquiry ? If so, I must still beg him to wait, till he comes to the seventh Chapter.

## CHAP. V.

### NO EVIDENCE FROM SCRIPTURE THAT INSPIRATION IS TO BE EXPECTED IN THE PRESENT OR ANY SUBSEQUENT AGE.

Something on this point has already appeared incidentally in the third chapter. We have there seen that many passages which have been *supposed* to hold out an expectation of the perpetual continuance of inspiration in the Church, favor that idea only by being grossly misunderstood or perverted. As the advocates of the notion have searched diligently for scriptural proof of it, and were men of great ingenuity and reading; and as they have found only *such* support from the bible as that now mentioned, we might draw the conclusion that *no* support of the sentiment *can* be found in scripture. And this conclusion we *do* draw, and are not afraid it will appear to our readers inconclusive reasoning, if they have perused the third chapter with attention. But we wished to *state the fact* at this stage of the discussion; and to say one word on the *importance* of that fact in our principal inquiry. It was certainly *to be expected*, if it were *true* that inspiration should continue to the end of the world, that *some intimation of it would be found* in the bible. It would be a very important fact; and one which we cannot by any means suppose the sacred writers would omit. Let us recollect for a moment the harmony that subsists between the divine messengers as they appear in the scripture history. Let us notice how the earlier messengers prepared the way for those who were to succeed them; and how those who followed always referred to their predecessors. Not only did they all mind and speak essentially the same things; but each one that preceded another would either directly *predict* the coming of the other, or give some clear intimation at least that further communications from above might be expected. But, if I mistake not, these predictions and intimations ceased with the last messengers of whom we read in the scriptures; or rather they delivered their messages, and said nothing of any suc-

cessors till the world shall end. Moses, it is true, and the revelations to the patriarchs which he records, and the ritual institutions which God gave by him, all pointed directly to *Christ.* But they did not intimate that his coming was *near;* they all contemplated a succession of providental dispensations, and special revelations, till like a succession of schoolmasters, these should lead the people to Christ, in the fulness of time. Accordingly there *was* a succession of prophets, preparing the way for each other, and each that succeeded confirming the word of all his predecessors, until Malachi. Between him and John Baptist was an interval of several hundred years. He announced the *speedy* coming of Christ; and particularly foretold the ministry of John Baptist. John came in the spirit and power of Elijah, an antient and distinguished prophet. He was the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord. He stood, and pointing to Jesus said, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. *Christ* came; who had been promised to Adam and Eve; who had been preached to Abraham; who was the prophet like unto Moses, greater than Solomon, David's descendant yet David's Lord. He fulfilled the prophecies that went before concerning him; and was the substance of all the types and shadows. And what promise did *he* give of future revelations? *He sent forth* his servants with miraculous powers and a heavenly commission in his life-time, and after his resurrection. Soon after his ascension he endued them with power from on high. *They* testified what they had seen and heard, of his doctrine, mighty works, life, death, resurrection, and ascension. *They and others* who were raised up and inspired conveyed the truth to most parts of the known world, and confirmed it by miracles. *They wrote* much to believers and others for farther direction in the faith, which is preserved for our use. *John* received a prophetical account of the principal events in the church, and the world as connected with the church, till the end of time. *This prophecy concludes* with denounc-

ing curses upon the man who should either add to it, or take from it. Now *these last* messengers from God mentioned in the bible, *have not told us of any who were to follow them.* They, particularly John, predicted many things; but did *not* predict either the *continuance* of inspiration, or its *revival* again, after it should have been suspended. *They do not tell* us either of a *succession* of prophets or apostles from their time till the present; or the coming of such messengers in *this* or any future period, after having ceased for ages. If there were to be a perpetual succession of messengers, following each other at shorter or longer intervals, it would be natural to expect those who came in scripture times would point forward to them, after the same manner which they adopted toward each other.

It strengthens this argument, in my apprehension, to notice that old-testament writers looked forward *beyond* the time of Christ, to the events of this age; and also predicted events *yet future*, the conversion of the Jews, and the millenial reign of Christ. They predicted *these* events; *but neither they, nor the Apostles, speak of the rising of any new messengers, of God's sending any more prophets.*

I do not say that all this is *conclusive* evidenee against perpetual inspiration; but shall venture to call it a *strong presumptive argument.*

There are however revelations and predictions in scripture, which have an intimate relation to this subject, and a very important bearing upon it. We have found no intimation of *true* prophets and apostles; but are warned against "*false* prophets; those who say they are apostles and are not; false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the Apostles of Christ." Rev. 2. 2. 2 Cor. 11. 13. The sacred writers warn us against delusions, in the last times particularly, though they assure us they had already begun in their own time. 1 John 4. 1. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world."

Here the writer seems to intend pretences to special revelations, by using the term *spirits*. 1 Tim. 4. 1. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to *seducing spirits*, and doctrines of devils." Among the predictions of the new testament, are those which relate to the apostacy and corruptions of the Romish church. Her pretensions to miracles, divine authority, and infallibility, which are supported by deception, are not overlooked 2 Thess. 2. 9, "Whose coming is after the working of satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders; and all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Our Lord gives a faithful and solemn warning on this subject. Matt. 24, 23, 24. "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets. and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." These, and other predictions and warnings of the same kind, are all we can find in the new-testament relating to revelations in the latter times. If modern pretenders are willing to adopt these as their authority, it is well. If not, I must suppose the statement at the beginning of this Chapter is proved, that there is "no evidence *from scripture* that inspiration is to be expected in this or any subsequent age."

## CHAP. VI.

### ADDITIONAL REASONS WHY WE SHOULD NOT LOOK FOR INSPIRATION.

From the silence of scripture on the subject of continued revelations from God, we have found *presumptive evidence* a-

gainst the notion. We have found this evidence confirmed by many predictions of *pretences and delusions.* We have granted the whole does not amount to positive and conclusive evidence on the subject. But we have several other reasons to assign. We think God will give us no more special communications, because

1. The scriptures are abundantly sufficient for every useful purpose. If there were any *need* of farther revelations, we might expect, from the mercy of God, to receive them. If there is *no need* of them, we may expect from the wisdom of God, and his usual manner of proceeding, that he will not bestow them.

By the sufficiency of scriptures, we mean not only that they are sufficient *for salvation* to him that understands and believes ; for a far less degree of light sufficed for the salvation of Abel, Abraham, and others : but we mean they are sufficient for all the designs of infinite wisdom, concerning the human race till the end of time. This could not with so great propriety have been said of the law and the prophets, before the coming of Christ ; nor of the preaching of his disciples in addition, till they had fully attested his resurrection, and explained his doctrines. But now the canon of scripture appears complete. Nothing is wanting for the conversion of sinners, but to read, hear, and obey. Nothing is wanting for direction to the believer in all the duties and trials of this life, in every possible situation, but to receive with meekness the engrafted word ; nothing for his eternal salvation, but to be moulded into the form of doctrine there delivered him. The servant of Christ, the stated pastor, or the missionary to the heathen, is " thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Nothing is wanting for making the church the perfection of beauty, but the sanctification of the spirit, and the belief of bible truth. Nothing is wanting for the " conversion of the world," and the commencement of the Millennium, but the universal diffusion of the truth as it is in Jesus ; with that faith, repentance, and new obedience, which the

bible requires. The bible *predicts* all this, without predicting the rise of any new prophets or apostles to accomplish it. It is believed that, so far as means are concerned, the bible is able to *accomplish* what it predicts, if it were once given to all people in their own languages, and faithfully preached to every creature.

If the scriptures *are* so full and complete for every purpose, we argue, God will give no more revelations, from two principles. We have already observed, *he will do nothing in vain.* We may also fairly conclude *he will put more honor on his own word.* If he were to give other revelations, he would in effect acknowledge the *insufficiency* of his word; he would excuse the perverseness of infidels, and the disobedient and impenitent of every description. When the Jews required evidence *perversely*, after he had done mighty works sufficient, he assured them he would give them no sign, but that of the Prophet Jonah. He honored the scriptures which they already had, by saying, John 5. 46, 47. "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?"—He was then delivering "his words" in addition to the writings of Moses; but he would add nothing at the expense of Moses; and Moses "wrote of him." Now his revelation is so complete, and none of his servants have "written" of any to follow; we may fairly conclude he will not pour contempt on his holy bible by acknowledging its insufficiency, or by adding to it any more.

2. *God will not needlessly multiply miracles;* and if he should, the effect would be destroyed. But we have before proved that special revelations can reasonably gain credit in the world, only by the evidence of miracles. The only instance to be excepted from this rule, is, when a divine messenger has been particularly and clearly *foretold* by preceding messengers. But the pretenders of our day are *not* predicted in scripture, except it be in the character of deceivers. Therefore if they should be accredited as divine messengers to the

people, it must certainly be by miracles. If the scriptures are sufficient, God would perform more miracles in vain ; to no good purpose. Is it not charging God foolishly, to say, that he will continue, through all the ages of the world, those works, which are in their own nature extraordinary ; which are for the confirmation of his word ? Would not such a course imply, that he could not give sufficient evidence in favor of his word in a shorter time ? Indeed miracles were not so profusely lavished upon men in scripture times. Those of Christ were very numerous ; but they continued a few years only. Those of the Apostles were many ; but they were needed for the conviction of successive auditories, through many cities and nations : when this was done, they ceased. Those of the more antient messengers in general were few. And many years, and in some instances several centuries, elapsed, during which not a single miracle was wrought. We cannot therefore suppose that he will continue and multiply miracles from the time of the Apostles to the end of the world. Be it remembered, that our opponents plead for the inspiration of *very many* persons, at the present day, and in every part of the world ; and require that their fellow men should believe and obey their messages. There is therefore no end to the number of miracles they must perform. We do not say at present, that we do not *see* those mighty works. We say only, it is imputing weakness and folly to God, to *expect* them.

Besides, were miracles so common, they would *cease to be* miracles. They would become ordinary events, occurring in the usual course of providence ; and cease to be regarded as indications of a *special* communication from heaven.

3. *The scheme of our opponents destroys itself.* They plead for "*universal* and saving light ; that lighteth *every man ;*" both believers and wicked men ; in gospel and in heathen lands. Now it is manifest, if a man is himself inspired, he needs not *another* inspired person to instruct him, to preach to him, or deliver him a message from God. And if *all* (as

they say,) are inspired, there is no room or ground whatever for one to be sent to another. But both these things belong to their scheme. They assert that *every man is inspired*: yet *very many appear as preachers, inspired preachers*; and call upon men to hear the word of the Lord from them. This contradiction in the several parts of their system subverts the whole. Their house is divided against itself, and must come to desolation. This contradiction does not exist in the scripture scheme. *Inspiration was never universal, even in the Church.* A few were inspired, and sent as divine messengers to their fellow-men; to the Jews first, and afterward to the Gentiles. Therefore there was still a great propriety in their *proving* their divine commission, and calling upon others to hear God's word. We very rarely read that one inspired messenger or prophet was sent to another. Whenever this *was* done, it was for their mutual strength, conviction, and consolation; and that they might *concur* in the Lord's work. We cannot reasonably embrace a scheme, which first provides that "all the Lord's people be prophets," and even all mankind; and then appoints a part of them as special messengers from God, to give light to the remainder, as if they were a people sitting in darkness.

4. Inspiration and miracles have ceased according to ecclesiastical history.

Many of the Apostles' fellow-laborers had the power of working miracles; and some special gifts seem to have been miraculously granted to some believers who were not public and ordained preachers. It is credibly attested that these gifts continued in a measure, and for a short period, after the decease of the Apostles. It is also granted that many in the Christian church really belived that miracles were wrought for a long time after. The accounts of them which have descended to us often border on the marvellous; and clearly show that credulity ere long began to give credit to appearances and reports of such things on slight evidence. Add to this that many of the accounts are deficient in the evidence

of their own authenticity. The miracles of Christ and his primitive servants have full evidence, which has been increasing with revolving centuries, and their *enemies* could say nothing against them. While those of the ages immediately succeeding are at least doubtful. Real, indisputable miracles, numerous and continued for several years, diminished the surprize which they at first excited; established an opinion that such attestations to preaching were to be expected; and thus rendered it easy for unsuspected pretensions to gain credit with believers. At the same time, the knowledge of such circumstances would tempt false teachers to pretend to them. Thus, the existence of the real counterfeits, and the doubtful cases, is best accounted for by the fact that the real and most evident miracles of our Lord and his Apostles had preceded them. However, all accounts which can lay any claim to authenticity, agree in the fact, that impositions were detected, and all pretensions ceased, in the course of a few centuries: and from that day to this no authentic and well-attested accounts of miracles can be produced. There have been likewise very few *pretences*, except in the Church of Rome. If *miracles* have long since ceased, then has *inspiration* ceased also; especially the inspiration of any persons as messengers to others.

5. *Pretences to inspiration as confirmed by miracles have been exposed, and usually come to nought.* We just remarked these have been few, except in the church of Rome. That mother of abominations has pretended to many. But intelligent protestants need no evidence at this day that they are "lying wonders;" and that they obtain credit from the people only by means of that profound ignorance in which they are held, and by the influence of that blind superstition which constitutes their religion. The Quakers, and some other sects at their first rise, professed to do mighty works. Of Fox, Clarkson observes, Vol. 1. p. 17. "There were individuals in the kingdom, who had publicly professed sights and prophecies concerning him. At an early age, he had

been reported, in some parts of the country, as a youth, who had a *discerning spirit*. *It had gone abroad*, that he had healed many persons, who had been sick of various diseases. Some of his prophecies had come true in the life-time of those, who had heard them delivered. —— From these causes the belief was universal among them, that his commission was of divine authority; and they looked upon him therefore in no other light, than that of a teacher, who had been sent to them from heaven." Some of their miracles are related in their early history. This pretence however seems to have been for a long time abandoned by that body; though they expect us to believe the inspiration of their teachers *without* a miracle.

The French prophets, perhaps, made greater pretensions to miracles than any of the modern sects. But their folly was soon manifest to all men, and the society is believed to be utterly extinct. Perhaps this presumptuous pretence hastened their overthrow; while others, who have abandoned the rash projects of their founders, still survive. The total want of success which attends those who pretend to miracles, evinces that God is not with them; and that we may not look in this day for the renewal of such power to men.

6. *Great events in the church and the world are produced by means of the truths of the bible, without new revelations.*

The *Reformation* was truly a great work. The change it has already effected in the visible church, and the moral state of whole nations, is immense beyond calculation; and the influence will extend to millions of souls to the close of time, and through eternity. It was a subject of scripture prophecy, and has long been a theme of joy and praise among the angels of God. Considering the previous state of things, we should judge it was a case, which required, (if *any* could since the Apostles' days,) the *special* interference of Jehovah. And truly it *was* his work. Overlooking all instruments, we are constrained to exclaim, "what hath God wrought." But he wrought it by the ordinary means; though by an unusual

blessing upon them. Neither Wickliff, nor Huss, nor Jerome, nor Luther, nor Calvin, nor Knox, was *inspired.* They brought forth *the bible* from its concealment; and *the bible* was the means in the hand of God of ushering in a new era to the church. The reformers did valiantly for the Rock of Zion; but they wrought no miracles. They were men of great powers of mind; and we trust had the spiritual understanding which is peculiar to believers: but they were not "moved by the holy Ghost" beyond the written word.

*Revivals of religion* are produced without inspiration. The effusion of the Spirit, in his convincing and renewing influences, is granted; and tens and hundreds press into the kingdom of heaven. They fly as a cloud, and as doves to their windows. But neither they, nor the ministers they hear, are inspired. They believe and obey *the scriptures.* Their hearts break with sorrow for the contempt they had previously shown to the *word of God.*

*The heathen are converted to Christ* without a miracle, or so much as a pretence of inspiration. *This* also is a great work, and it is already begun. Many run to and fro, and knowledge is increased. Many, in different places, are turned from their dumb idols. Through the whole Christian world the work of evangelizing the heathen is at least begun. Christ seems evidently to be riding forth, conquering and to conquer; and the time to be drawing near, when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ. But the work is carried on in the ordinary way. There is no gift of tongues; but missionaries acquire languages by study, and translate the *bible* for the heathen. They are not *inspired;* but search the scriptures, and shun not to declare the whole counsel of God, there delivered. They work no miracles; but when the blessing attends their "teaching and their preaching", their word is with power. This work, it is believed, is preparatory to the Millennium; when darkness shall no longer cover the earth; but when it shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cov-

er the sea. It is reasonable to suppose the work will *proceed* in the same manner it has *begun*, till that day shall arrive. A careful examination of the scriptures will evince that only ordinary means are *predicted*, to be employed, even for the introduction of the Millennium; that even the latter day glory of the church is not to require *additions* to the word of God.

If the scriptures are sufficient; if God will not needlessly multiply miracles; if the scheme of our opponents destroys itself; if pretences to revelations and miraculous powers have come to nought; and if great events in the church are produced by the ordinary means; we may well prize the bible, and cease to look for a sign from heaven.

## CHAP. VII.

### SOME PRETENDED REVELATIONS EXAMINED.

It is difficult to make a collection of the revelations, which are supposed to be received in the present day from above. Few have been published from the press, so far as I know; although they are propagated probably every day, by preaching and conversation. Of those which have came to my knowledge within a few years, memory can now recal probably a small part only. The following must be considered only as a *sample*. Different persons have asserted that God has communicated to them severally the following facts: that there would soon be a *reformation or revival* in a certain place; that a particular *person or persons would be converted*; that another person *had been converted* a number of years, though it was unsuspected by himself and all his acquaintance, till the revelation was made to his neighbor; that a certain *person would die* in a given time, or one or more of a certain number; that *a certain place would be visited with desolating sickness, or sunk by an earthquake*; and even that *the world would come to an end, and the judgment day arrive, within a fixed time.* Often has *one person been sent to another, with a special message from God*, received

(in his opinion,) immediately from heaven. Some have been directed *to join themselves to a certain people*, or *to separate* from a certain people or minister, on pain of God's wrath. Many have professed to be *endued with the gift of discerning spirits;* and could decide the state of a person's soul, though he were a perfect stranger, from hearing him speak a few words, or from merely observing his countenance. We have before noticed that one was informed by a vision, that *Paul disowned three chapters* of his epistle to the Romans; and it is believed that is far from being the only instance in which new revelations *have taken away portions of the word of God.* Some have had, as they profess, *visions of heaven and of hell;* have *seen individuals* of their departed acquaintance in one place and the other; yea, have thus *ascertained the final states* of their friends and neighbors who were still living, and declared it unto them.

It is a general, perhaps universal, belief in several denominations, that no one is called to preach the gospel without *a special voice of God in his mind*, in every respect the same as a revelation; *the same as the call to ancient prophets.* Preachers also profess to receive *their doctrine* from God's Spirit; and to *be directed* by his special monitions *in what places to labor.*

This account might be enlarged. But the subject is too painful, and I forbear.

But the *evidence* given for the *truth* of such revelations must be examined.

Leaving future ages out of the question, I shall pursue the method adopted in the fourth chapter, and bring *these* revelations to the tests there laid down. Our inquiries therefore will be, whether any person now has evidence *to himself* that *he* is inspired, and whether he *gives or can give* sufficient evidence *to his fellow men?*

## SECTION 1.

*Has any person at this day sufficient evidence* to himself *that he is inspired?*

The five maxims we established in the fourth Chapter are these: if God make a special revelation to a person, he will do it in a manner *adapted to the rational powers of man*; the manner and subject will be *worthy of God*; the communication will be in a *supernatural manner*; in some cases *evidence may be addressed to the senses*, including dreams, visions, and trances; and, whatever *method* God adopts, he will give the person *certain* evidence, such as shall leave *no doubt* on his mind that God has spoken to him.

As the question at present relates to the evidence a person should have *for his own satisfaction* alone, I am not so anxious to examine the matter closely, as I shall be in the next section. I feel disposed to say to a believer in his own inspiration, as Paul said in another instance, "Hast thou faith? *Have it to thyself*, before God." We have little concern with you, if you do not obtrude your revelations on others. Nevertheless, it may be a means of *preventing* some from *publishing* their reveries, as well as saving *their own* souls from the influence of delusions, if they will suffer us a little to examine the subject.

*Are*, then, the supposed revelations we have mentioned, and others of this day, *given in a manner adapted to our rational powers*; and *are* they, examined by reason and scripture, *worthy of God?* Rather, are they not frequently, like heathen oracles, either equivocal or unintelligible, or grossly irrational? Are not some of them too mean, puerile, or sensual, as well as without any object or use, to be attributed to a wise and Christian *man*; and above all, to the wise and holy God? Some, not mentioned in the above collection, appear to a serious mind as little related to religion, and as little capable of conveying instruction or imparting light, on *any* subject, as the same number taken at random from a person's common dreams.

Are any of the modern revelations *addressed to the senses*, sleeping or waking? It is *said*, they frequently are. Persons see sights, hear voices, dream dreams, and sometimes fall

into trances. And how can we know but they have all the evidence to their own minds which scripture prophets had? One reason is, the puerile or useless nature of the revelation itself, already noticed; which is the fact with many. Another reason is, the *previous state of their minds* is such as to *prepare* them for deception, and unfit them for calm investigation. Taught to expect such things, they are anxiously looking for them; uninformed respecting scriptural evidences, they are extremely credulous, and ready to receive any slight appearance for the reality. Elated with the expectation of becoming favorites of heaven, and companions of the Apostles, they are looking, with gaping solicitude, for something supernatural. Add to these, that their revelations usually come *at the time*, or immediately *after* the time, in which their minds have been violently agitated with fear and concern; or their zeal has been raised to a great height; or their imaginations have been filled with relations of wonders similar to those they expect and desire. It is not surprizing that *such persons*, at *such times*, should imagine what they neither see, nor hear, nor feel; or that they should consider some vagary of the imagination, a supernatural voice or vision. If they sleep, it is not surprizing they should dream; nor is it unlikely they should think their dreams to be revelations from above, when they might easily be accounted for on natural principles.

Again, the same causes will prevent calm and faithful examination *afterward*. They are usually, I believe, very soon employed in *relating* what has occurred; the previous excitement is not allayed but increased by the wonder they have experienced; the approbation and congratulations of others raise their fancies and passions still higher; and there remains neither time nor capacity to ask themselves, whether they may not have been deceived. It is true that *some* do not receive their revelations in such a storm. The Friends, at the present day, wait for the Spirit in solemn silence. But they adopt the *principle* (that revelations are continued in

later times,) in a state of as great agitation, as is now witnessed in other sects. They have lost their fervor, and "*the holy duty of quaking*," (as one of their writers* termed it,) is now seldom practiced. With the abatement of their zeal, they also seem to have been deprived of some portion of their revelations. They have not probably such an "abundance" now, as some others. They appear to obtain from this source little, besides their *doctrines* and *excitements* to duty. Still their *principle* is as broad as ever. And their receiving fewer than others; and the fact that this principle with them originated in a period of great fanaticism; both strengthen my assertion, that pretended revelations owe their origin and reception with men to perturbation of mind, and want of calm and close examination of their evidence, by those who suppose they receive them. Many reasons might be given why the Friends, who are remarkably sedate, should continue to believe as their fathers did; in the principle in which they have been carefully taught from their earliest years, secluded as they are from other society. Is it too much however to hope, that, having lost the revelations of the wild enthusiast, they will in time abandon his *principle* altogether?

If however it appears that evidence to the senses is wanting, it may still be said, God did not always use this method of revealing truths to the scripture messengers. He *more* frequently made internal objective revelations to the mind, in *some* peculiar manner, which the person could not mistake. And perhaps our modern prophets do receive revelations in the same way; and as those who have not enjoyed the same favor cannot understand the subject, they ought not to dispute or doubt their assertions. I readily grant I was never inspired; and do not know *how* the Spirit moved on the minds of his ancient prophets. "I am not a prophet, nor a prophet's son." Yet it may not be impossible to form a rational and scriptural judgment on this point. If a man of probity, veracity, and piety, calmly assures me he "hath a

* Friend Fisher, as quoted by C. Mather.

revelation," I may believe that he *thinks so*; but I might still suppose it possible he is *deceived*. Let us recollect, though the true prophet knows the manner of the Spirit; yet *another* may suppose he is inspired, when he is not. Let us recollect, the same thing is granted by the strongest advocate for perpetual inspiration. Therefore, with all the reasons against the expectation of *any* new revelation in the present day, which were produced in the fifth and sixth chapters, I should think myself authorized and required to doubt; and to suppose the person was deceived. This I should do, in the fairest case; in the instance of a man of strict veracity, sedateness, and sound judgment. I should advise him, before grounding his faith or practice on what he has thus received, to bring the revelation itself to the test of scripture, with the most anxious scrutiny.

But if the person be one of vivid imagination, of strong passion, and hasty judgment; if he have received this at a time of alarm or other excitement, and in a situation unfavorable to calm inquiry; if he appear to have been expecting it, and credulously regarding mere reports or assertions of such things in others; if he is *not* a man of known and tried veracity and integrity; if the thing revealed do *not* correspond with scripture, or is evidently unworthy of God; I should at once conclude a deceived heart had turned him aside, or that he had fallen into the snare of the devil. Barclay, after making the above concession, and allowing that the Anabaptists of Munster and others *had* been deceived, and led (as they supposed by the Spirit,) into "monstrous and mischievous actings;" still affirms, the "Spirit never deceived *us*; never acted nor moved *us* to any thing that was amiss; but is clear and manifest in its revelations, which are evidently discerned by *us*." But would not the Anabaptists have said the same? Might not *they* say, the *Quakers* are deluded, but the Spirit never deceived *us*? The wildest fanatic who ever raved, might, and probably *would*, say, the Spirit never deceived *me*. An internal revelation (where there is so much evi-

dence it is *never* given in our day,) is *certainly a most uncertain thing ;* and we must hesitate to admit a certain evidence from the *manner* of the Spirit on the mind, and examine the *subject matter* supposed to be revealed. But to avoid repetition, this shall be considered in the next section.

## SECTION 2.

Do modern pretenders to inspiration give sufficient evidence *to the people*, when they *propagate* their revelations ?

It is observable that few tell us of communications they have received exclusively for their own use ; they must *preach and declare them to the world.* It is not enough therefore that *they* believe them, they must produce evidence to convince *others.* Others should not be unreasonable in their demands ; yet they are rational beings, and must have *some* proof. I shall not here follow the *order* of the fourth chapter, where we stated the evidence which reason requires,and which God's servants *did* give ; but shall remember the *principles* there laid down, and bring modern pretences to the same test.

1. Modern revelations are not proved *to the people* by the *same evidence* which satisfies *the persons who receive them.* The people, who are required to believe them, do not hear the voice from heaven bearing testimony to a prophet, and calling on them to hear him. They do not see the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire, from which God speaks to a modern Moses ; nor hear the thunderings, while he is with God in the mount. The prophet declares what God has said to him, or how he has appeared to him *in private ;* or in the *secret of his own mind,* while he stood in the assembly. He must therefore produce *other* evidence.

2. Modern revelations are *not predicted in scripture,* (except in the character of delusions.) God's ancient messengers gave no notice of any like themselves to arise in this latter day ; as we have noticed before. There is no prophet now on the stage whose mission has *already* been so clear-

ly attested, that we are bound to receive his additional revelations *without new* evidence beyond his own word. Or, if this should be pretended, we revert to his *first introduction*, and demand, what were his credentials *then?* We come then inevitably to this conclusion, that none are to be received at this day, unless they work miracles. But

3. Modern revelations *totally want the evidence of miracles.*

It is well known that miracles, or something equivalent, are *believed* to be wrought by some preachers; but let us examine them, to see if they are miracles indeed. The sudden *awakening and conversion* of a sinner are ascribed to miraculous power; and adduced as evidence that the preacher, who has been the means of it, is inspired. If *many* are converted, the miracle is still more wonderful, and the preacher still more a favorite of heaven. Not to question at present the *genuineness* of the supposed conversions; we undertake to say that conversions and revivals are *not miracles.* The conversion of Saul of Tarsus was *attended* with a miracle, the light and voice from heaven. But the grace which touched and renewed his heart was not miraculous. Miracles (speaking in different languages,) *preceded* the glorious revival of the day of Pentecost. But the influence of the Spirit, which convinced and renovated the three thousand, was that which is given to attend the preaching of the word in all ages. A *copious* effusion was then granted in one day; and some days in modern times have been favored and distinguished in a similar manner. We readily grant the conversion of sinners by means of the word is the glorious work of God; that this work may appear in its fruits and effects on the converted persons. But then no single soul was ever renewed without it. It is common to all ages of the church. It differs exceedingly from a miracle; and is never termed miraculous in the bible.

Again, it is often understood that preachers and exhorters are "workers of miracles," because they speak with such

wonderful fervor, fluency, and power. Now it will be allowed that the officer's account of Christ is as true in this age, as it was then; "never man spake like this man." But *his* miracles were totally distinct from his doctrine, or manner of preaching. The *true* ministers of Christ receive assistance in preaching; the Spirit "helpeth their infirmities." Yet it is not a miraculous gift. The preaching of some has ever been called "speaking with tongues;" when they had spoken only in English. This opinion seems to have been founded on the idea, that, when the Apostles are said to have spoken with tongues, it was a mystical expression, denoting great fluency and power. Perhaps the comparison would be dropped, if they should learn the *fact* (Acts 2.) that the Apostles addressed people of different tongues and nations, without having had a previous knowledge of their languages.

We must notice also that *actual* miracles have been *pretended*, and perhaps attempted. "*It had gone abroad*," says Clarkson, "that he [Fox] had healed many persons." It is easy for almost any thing to "go abroad," when once an interested or ignorant, or credulous person has originated a story. But Clarkson attempts *no proof of facts*. It has *gone abroad*, and with much appearance of *truth*, that some have pretended to heal the sick, and raise the dead, within a few years past. Their sick however were no better, a few days after, but rather grew worse; and their dead still rest in their graves, and will rest, till *God* shall raise them at the last trump.

Miracles may be pretended. But if they are wrought *secretly*, they are not answerable to scripture miracles, (which were done openly before the world;) and are no better than the tricks of jugglers and fortune tellers. If they are pretended to be wrought *openly*, and *are indeed* subject to examination, it is believed any man of common sense or judgment may see they are not wrought. In fine, I challenge all the pretenders to revelation in America, to pro-

duce a single instance of a miracle, wrought in proof of such revelation, within thirty years past. I mention *so long* time, because I would give them a *sufficient* period to search in; I mention *no longer* time, because witnesses should be still living, and within the reach of examination. The instance must be worthy of rational belief. The miracle must have been wrought openly, before men; it must have been obvious to the senses; it must have followed the word of the prophet immediately, and without the use of ordinary means; it must have been evidently contrary to the course of nature; it must now be supported by the testimony of credible, competent, uninterested witnesses. Let such a miracle be well authenticated, if it have been wrought. I am aware that many will yield this point, and grant that miracles have not been wrought; who will still say, they believe in the inspiration of some persons notwithstanding. But, seeing miracles are the test of revelations from God, when published in his name, they must excuse us from uniting in the belief. This we must hold to be *a conclusive argument*, if there were no other.

4. Modern revelations *do not agree with the scriptures.*

We have seen how all the scripture writers and messengers harmonize together, though succeeding each other through many ages. Now, if our modern prophets are from the same God, and speak by the same Spirit, how is it that they *contradict* the scriptures, or *deviate* so widely from them? The first part of this work has probably convinced the candid reader that the *Quaker* system of doctrines is in some points *different* from the scriptures; and in most, directly *contradictory*. Yet they, as a body, profess to be led by the Spirit. The sacred messengers attested the inspiration of those who had preceded them, and quoted their words as the oracles of God. But modern pretenders (besides holding doctrines contrary to scripture,) directly oppose the scriptures, by saying they are not the word of God; while they claim that distinction for *their own* word. It would be easy to show

that some others beside the Quakers hold and propagate doctrines, which directly contradict those of Christ and his Apostles; nay that they *ridicule* some of Paul's sentiments, and treat them as cunningly-devised fables. If they were, as they would represent, the successors and equals of the Apostles, they would certainly coincide with them in doctrine, and preach no other gospel. I do not represent my opponents as assuming more than they do. Is not a claim to inspiration, the same as claiming an equality with the Apostles? If they degrade the scriptures, and pretend to have gone far *beyond* the sacred writers, do they not even place themselves *above* them in rank and authority? Add to these, the familiarity with which they sometimes speak of those "holy men of old," proves that they consider themselves as their equals. "Old brother Paul," is a phrase which, among others similar, my own ears have heard from the mouth of a preacher. But surely the claim of equality cannot be admitted, till they agree better with the messengers whom God has already sent. If they *do* preach any scriptural doctrine, and that with great power; if they are instrumental in the *real* conversion of sinners, and are made useful in the world; all this is no evidence of their inspiration. They have the scriptures in their hands; and have learnt there, or from preaching, or conversation, or early instruction, all that *does* coincide with scripture. Even if a man does not, and cannot, read the bible, he must have been very retired in this country, not to have learnt something of its contents from one or other of the above mentioned sources. However, we *have* in general *no need* of accounting for their delivering doctrines which are consistent with scripture, or which produce any *lasting* good effects. The *tendency and actual effects* of their revelations might be named as a distinct reason against their being from God. But it is a delicate point, and I pass it over. I cannot however forbear stating my own *conviction*, that, if a tree is known by its fruit, and a doctrine by its effects on those who embrace it; then those principles, which produce only

that goodness which is as the morning cloud and early dew, cannot be from God. If a principle would lead me into false religion, I am *required* to reject it; as the Israelites were to reject those who enticed them to some other gods. This was evidence enough. Even if the "sign or the wonder *come to pass*;" whereof *such* a prophet had spoken, they were not to give heed to him. Deut. 13, 1. So if modern pretenders deny or contradict the scriptures, or if their doctrine lead men into sin, rather than convert them to God; we are not to believe them to be sent of God, even if they *should* perform signs and wonders.

5. As modern revelations do not agree with *scripture*, so it may be said of them as of the witnesses against our Lord, "*neither do their testimonies agree together.*" The sacred writers agree with each other. Paul insists much on the harmony between himself and the other laborers at Corinth; and shows that the false teachers neither agreed with them, nor among themselves. It is very evident, that if God *does* inspire two men at this day, he will not set them to contradicting each other. But, if I am correctly informed, this is not uncommon in some assemblies of brethren in the same community; each receiving his doctrine, as he declares immediately from above. The freewill Baptist too is far from agreeing with the Quaker; and the Shakers, originally Friends, and only receiving farther light from the same Spirit, have left their former associates in the wide ungodly world, and become in their own view, the only true church on earth. I know men *do* embrace very different opinions, who profess to take the *bible* for their guide. Still *there is the bible*, in plain language: and every man may judge for himself. But tell us to follow an inward teacher, and believe the assertion of pretenders to intercourse with heaven; and the rule itself assumes a thousand shapes, and vanishes while we grasp it. The abettors of this plan proposed to *remove* all the uncertainties of the scripture, and give us an *infallible* guide. We see they have not accomplished the object. They, who will build a Babel, must expect to have their language confounded.

6. The believers in modern revelations are *seldom well established.* They seem, too often, to be "men given to change." It is no uncommon thing, with those who forsake the scriptures to follow other guides, to change from one denomination to another, and one opinion to another; till they are called out of the world; or settle down in infidelity, universalism, or an indifference to all religion. At every stage of this process the person is *sure he is now right*; but is soon afterward *as certain* he had been *wrong.* Now an infallible teacher would not at any time teach them error; nor would he contradict at one time what he had revealed at another; nor would he lead men into infidelity and indifference. A person who follows the *bible* may change his opinions; for he may not have attended to the bible, and understood it; he may be converted, and his views be changed of course; he may be a Christian of a weak mind, and not be perfectly established in the truth; and every Christian ought to be ever open to conviction, and renounce a doctrine when convinced. But real Christians, who have opportunities for instruction, and who make the bible their guide, are usually established in the truth; they are not carried about by every wind of doctrine. Among belivers in the bible, instances of instability and falling away occur; of such as had not their hearts established by grace, and were not rooted and grounded in love. A *few* instances, therefore, among believers in new revelations, would not be noticed here as an objection to their scheme. But instances with them are *very common.* There is scarcely such a thing as stability or constancy among them. Whereas, if they have a more sure guide than the scriptures, and do certainly know that God teaches them, they ought to be the most stable and unwavering of all people. If they *are* taught of God, how comes it to pass that they are "ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth?" Christ never taught more than one system of doctrines. Paul and his brethren were established in the truth, from the begin-

ning of their ministry to the close of their lives. Among *these* preachers, it is not uncommon for the same man to *renounce* what he has formerly preached, several times, in the course of his life; and at each time, if you will believe him, is taught of God. It is better however to renounce error, when convinced of it, than to cleave to it; only we should beware of falling into that which is worse. I was pleased with the *candor* of one of them on a late occasion. It is said he had heard a brother prophet preach, with whom he was little acquainted; and publicly testified *by the Spirit*, that the prophet had spoken by the Spirit of God. He was soon after convinced of his mistake, and took much pains to acknowledge it, and recall his assertion. This was well. But, if he will take the advice of a friend, he will never trust such a lying spirit again; but judge of preachers and doctrines by the *bible*.

Perhaps many *Friends*, at this day, are an exception to these remarks concerning *changeableness*; though it will be recollected they are retracing the wandering steps of their more zealous fathers. The cause of their uniformity in principles is easily found. They do not now so much follow delusive spirits, as they do their *parents* and their *writers*, who inculcate the principles of the body very early, and very carefully. Still it is worthy of serious inquiry, whether *constancy in error* is *much* preferable to perpetual wandering and uncertainty.

7. *The evidence*, on which modern revelations *are actually believed, is far from being sufficient.* It will be noticed, that this remark contains a censure on those persons who *receive* the pretended messages, as if they were given by inspiration, as well as on the preachers who demand their assent. God forbid that I should reproach any man for *ignorance*. He may not have been favored with opportunities to become better informed. If he have *neglected* opportunies which God *has* given him, and even have despised the bible and the dispensation of the gospel, it is not my business to reproach

or condemn. I would, if possible, tenderly warn and instruct. Neither do I forget, that God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the mighty; and the foolish things, to confound the wise. Many, who had not strong minds nor much knowledge, have become wise unto eternal life. Receiving from the Spirit *a humble heart*, they have embraced those humbling truths of the gospel, which the pride of others has rejected. It is therefore no objection to a revelation or doctrine, that it is received by the *ignorant or unlearned;* especially if it *makes them spiritually wise.* It may have the most incontestible evidence in its favor. The true revelation of God has been received by some of this description in all ages. But if, *after* they have received it, they remain ignorant, even of the first principles of the oracles of God; if they neither understand, nor receive, the plain doctrines of God's word; we may conclue they are not taught from the same source. But, passing by the *ignorance*, in many cases, of those who believe the inspiration of modern prophets; let us notice their *fondness for novelty*, their *credulity*, their *confidence*, and their *unwillingness to examine.* The followers of the prophets in question are *fond of the marvelous.* The bible is too antient for them, and too common. The faithful and spiritual preaching of the gospel by ordinary ministers is too trite and tedious. They seem to think, that a revelation given and proved so long ago, must have become old, and ready to vanish away. Its truths are insipid; its institutions, and the duties it enjoins, must *necessarily* be nothing but formality; and *all*, who pay any attention to such a dead letter, *must* be hypocrites and pharisees. They sigh for novelties. They want something wonderful; which shall excite their admiration, and affect their passions. It is easy to see that such minds are prepared to be the dupes of satan. They are fitted to yield at once to the bold and confident assertions of those who profess to have been inspired directly from above; who bring them the novelties they crave; who tell them of the wonders they expect. No mat-

ter about evidence ; the more marvellous and incredible, the more acceptable. Many of the present generation seem to be well described by our Lord, Matt. 12. 39. "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign." With this temper of mind is usually found a blind *credulity*. It is believed the hearers in question are *prepared* to believe on slight evidence, particularly when their passions are excited, and their prejudices cherished. And all men know that credulity is liable to be satisfied, where sober judgment would see *no* evidence whatever. It opens the mind to mere assertions, and is wholly gained by boisterous declamations. To this we must add a great *confidence* in the truth of what they have once believed. The inspired preachers were confident, and could speak with all authority. It is doubted whether any uninspired man can have the same *degree* of confidence with them, or upon the same ground. Still I grant that a believer or preacher of our time may be persuaded of the truth *from scripture*, and by a spiritual *understanding* of scripture, so that all *doubt* may be excluded, and he may be willing to venture his soul forever on the truth of the doctrines he believes. But much depends on the *manner of arriving* at our confidence. *These* arrive at certainty in a short time, without examination or inquiry. They are peculiarly *averse* to inquiry. God has revealed a thing to them ; or they have received it from another person, to whom it was revealed ; and they *know* it is true. It is a sin in them to doubt it ; yea, he that doubteth is damned. What *need* then of examining the *evidence* of the revelation ? What need, or what room, is there for examining the *scriptures*, to see whether it agrees with them ? This, it is believed, is seldom done. In general they take it for granted, or rather evident beyond all dispute, that what they feel, or see, or hear, is from the Spirit of God ; and therefore it needs not inquiry, and bids defiance to doubt. They seem to have little or no fear of deception ; manifest little dread of the devices of satan ; and I fear have forgotten the assertion of Jehovah, "the heart is de-

ceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." It is surely the dictate of wisdom, *infinite wisdom*, "be not confident, even in a plain way ;" and again, "believe not every spirit, but *try* the spirits, whether they be of God ; because many false prophets are gone out into the world."

The result of our examination in this chapter is this : Modern revelations are not predicted in scripture, (except as delusions ;) totally want the evidence of miracles ; do not agree with the scriptures ; do not harmonize with each other ; do not establish them who believe them, but suffer them to wander perpetually ; and gain credit principally with those who are credulous, confident, and impatient of inquiry, and fond of the marvellous. In view of these things, I am persuaded there is no light in them, and turn to the law and the testimony.

## CHAP. VIII.

THE STATE OF THE HEATHEN EVINCES, THAT INSPIRATION DOES NOT WITH THEM SUPPLY THE WANT OF THE SCRIPTURES.

It will be recollected that the sentiment I oppose is, that revelation or inspiration is *universal*, *with*, *or without*, the bible : writers *assert* that many who have no external means are savingly enlightened ; and that we have already seen, the passages of scripture on which they rely, and which relate to the heathen, do not prove the assumption. If it be *farther* proved that the heathen, who have not heard of Christ from the bible, are "in darkness even until now," it will serve still more clearly to show that revelation has ceased. For, not only does the sentiment in question extend the favor to the heathen ; but reason would judge, that if inspiration *be* continued, it would be granted to them who have not the revelation previously given. This part of the subject is so distinct from others, it was necessary to reserve it for a separate chapter I shall state and answer a few inquiries.

1. What light *do* the heathen possess, as the subject is stat-

ed in the scriptures? The Apostle comes directly to this point in his first and second chapters to the Romans. It will therefore be sufficient to quote those passages, and comment upon them, remembering that other scriptures coincide with these. 1. 19—23. "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools; and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." 2. 12, 14, 15. "For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing one another."——From this account it appears, that the heathen or Gentiles *have not the law or revelation*, which the Jews had; that they have reason or understanding; and that the existence and natural perfections of God are manifested in his works, so that they might discover them without revelation: that they have a conscience and a moral sense, which, with their reason, assure them they ought to love, worship, and serve their Maker. It appears moreover that they had not conducted according to this knowledge; but their mind becoming blind, their conscience defiled, and their heart debased and corrupt, they had lost the knowledge of the true God, and universally worshipped idols. The Apostle shows that they were verily guilty, yea without excuse; and having sinned, would perish; but would not suffer so great a de-

gree of punishment as those who had sinned against the greater light of revelation.

Here is not however one word about a revelation of Jesus Christ, or a way of pardon and salvation by a Redeemer. It is a principle with our opponents that, "if the heathen have not light sufficient for *salvation*, then they have not sufficient for *condemnation*." This is the same as to say, the government would be just in condemning criminals according to *known* laws, unless they had informed every criminal in the country how he might be pardoned: or, a child has not knowledge, sufficient to condemn him for disobedience to his parents, unless he *also* know how, in *every case*, he may regain their favor. Or in other words, there is nothing criminal in rebelling against God, unless we know that he will forgive. But according to scripture, all rational creatures, who have any knowledge of God, are guilty and deserve to be condemned forever, if they rebel against him. It was mere *mercy*, which gave God's eternal Son to die for a lost world. It was mere *mercy* which gave the gospel to the Jews, and to us. It will be mere mercy, which *will* give the gospel to those who are now in darkness. God *might* have left us all under condemnation, without providing a ransom; and without making it known to us, after it was paid; and still he would have been just and glorious. It is not so much our object to *vindicate* God's dealings with the heathen, as to *ascertain facts*. Thus much however it seemed proper to say, because many appear to think that, if the heathen do *not* know the way of life, God is *unjust*. We have, I think, ascertained the *fact*; that they have only the knowledge which reason can acquire from viewing the things that are made; but no knowledge of that only name given under heaven among men, by which we must be saved.

2. We inquire, *What are the statements in scripture concerning the character, state and necessities* of the heathen? They are described as being immoral, wicked, and dead in trespasses and sins: this is their *moral character*: as in a

*state* of ruin and condemnation: as being in perishing *need* of the *gospel* of salvation; and the hearing and reading of the gospel is the *only* means pointed out by which they will be, or can be, enlightened and saved. The Apostle gives a most awful account of their moral corruption and degradation in the concluding part of the 1st chap. to the Romans; to which the reader is referred. In his judgment they were sunk to the lowest grade of pollution and iniquity. As to their *ruin;* it is very apparent that *such* sinners must be nigh unto destruction; and the Apostle abundantly "proved, that both Jews and Gentiles were all under sin; children of wrath; under condemnation," from which none but Christ can deliver them. And *how* does *he* deliver them? Can they call on him, in whom they have *not believed?* Can they *believe* on him, of whom they have *not heard?* And can they *hear* without a *preacher?* If the gospel be not necessary to enlighten the Gentiles, why did Christ command his servants to go *into all the world*, and preach the gospel *to every creature*? *Every part* of the scripture shows that such are the character and wants of the heathen *in all ages* after the calling of Abraham. "Salvation was of the Jews." Some were united with them, out of other nations; and others still received more or less distinct knowledge of the truth by intercourse with them. But all other nations worshipped idols, bowed down to them, and served them. Addressing *Israel*, God says, Isa. 60, 2, &c. "Behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon *thee*, and his glory shall be seen upon *thee.*" Then follows a prediction of the future conversion of the Gentiles; but *how* is it done? "And the Gentiles shall come to *thy* light, and kings to the brightness of *thy* rising. Lift up thine eyes round about and see; all they gather themselves together, they come *to thee.*" Again Mic. 4, 2. "And many nations shall come and say, come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk

in his paths ; for *the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.*" The gospel, sent by the *church*, or those who have *already* enjoyed it, is to be the means of saving the nations, and not revelations made to *them*, and light springing up *among themselves.* The *word* of the Lord is to run, and have free course, and be glorified. When the fields are ripe, the Lord will send forth labourers into the harvest.

3. *What do facts evince* concerning the condition and necessities of the heathen ? Passing by former ages, we shall come to the present ; only remarking, that both sacred and profane history ; the declarations of God, and the observations of men ; concur in representing people, who are destitute of the oracles of God, precisely in the same state in which we now find them. And the reports of voyagers, travellers, residents in heathen lands, traders and missionaries, all substantially agree. If there are exceptions, they are those persons who have made but a slight observation, or those who are heathenish in their religious views and feelings, and have an interest in disguising the truth. But these exceptions are few ; and the facts which even *such* men disclose, do, in the light of reason and scripture, strongly confirm the united testimony of all others. And what is the substance of that testimony ? That the heathen every where are grossly immoral and debased : that in every nation, either stealing, or lying, or uncleanness, or murder in cases of convenience, or some other abomination, or several or all of them together, prevail and abound. It will be said, vice and immorality prevail in *Christian lands.* They do : and far greater is the guilt of the transgressors. But *here*, they prevail *partially* ; *there universally* : *here*, iniquity must hide its head ; *there*, men declare their sin as Sodom, and hide it not, but glory in their shame : *here*, vice is reprobated by the public opinion ; *there*, it is allowed and applauded : *here*, the consciences of the wicked sometimes disturb and restrain them ; *there*, conscience approves their evil deeds : *here*, the natu-

ral and social affections have vast influence in regulating the lives even of the impenitent ; *there*, our fellow men are "without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful" : *here*, even a vicious sinner is sometimes converted from the error of his ways ; *there*, he uniformly increases unto more ungodliness, till he dies without hope.

What is reported to us concerning *their religion*? In general they are *idolaters* ; worshipping idols of wood and of stone, engraven by art, and man's device Others worship the sun, or the host of heaven, or living creatures on the earth, or some part of the vegetable creation. Others again adore invisible but imaginary deities ; as unlike the true God as darkness is to light. Others have some notion of a great Spirit ; but they think him altogether such an one as themselves. With this last opinion is often united the idea of a *bad* spirit ; and *he* is their principal deity. Secure of the favor of the good, they worship the *evil* spirit, to avert his anger, and secure his friendship. Thus they have lords many and gods many ; but Him, who made the heavens and the earth ; in whose hands their breath is, and whose are all their ways ; Him they neither know nor glorify. All who have any religion, worship false gods ; violating the first dictate of reason, and the first command of God ; of that God who will not give his glory to another, neither his praise to graven images. But does not idolatry prevail in *Christian* nations ? We answer, no. The actual worship of images and false gods is banished from protestant countries, by the light of the gospel. It is an iniquity too gross to be practised *in one instance*. Well do we know that the love of the world is idolatry ; that it abounds in countries enlightened by the gospel ; and that the guilt of him, who *here* loves and serves the creature rather than the Creator, is immense, and his condemnation will be dreadful. But *who*, in a gospel land, is ever seen bowing down to the stock of a tree, or worshipping a god which his own hands have made ?

Let us farther consider *the nature* of heathen religion. *It*

*excuses and even sanctions their gross immoralities.* They do not worship God in the beauty of holiness; "the characters of the Hindoo religion are *obscenity and blood.*" It promises heaven to the widow who devotes her life on the funeral pile of her husband; and to the parent who is devout enough to plunge his child in the flood of the Ganges. Almost all nations present sacrifices and offerings to their gods: but "they sacrifice to devils and not to God." And yet *these* are the sacrifices that are to take away sin, instead of that of the Lamb of God.

What is reported to us of the *religious knowledge* of the heathen? From the fact that they live in the habitual practice of such *deeds* of darkness, we should infer that the *light* which is in them is darkness. And such is the account we receive. They are not all ignorant of letters; in several countries there are many learned men: and they are *all* wise to do evil. But it is literally and universally true, that "to do good, they have no knowledge." They have *no* correct views of God, of his law, of moral obligation, of the duties of life, of a future retribution, and an eternal state. Most of all, they know not Jesus Christ, whom God hath sent, whom to know is the *only* way of eternal life. A certain evidence of their ignorance is this: when Missionaries *do* go, and instruct them, the subject is *altogether new to them.* If they *were* taught by the Spirit, without the word, they would *know* something of Christ and salvation. But they are ignorant both of his *name* and *work*, and every thing relating to his salvation. A single instance of a heathen's having known the gospel before he learnt it from reading or hearing, cannot be produced from all the Missionary accounts which are before the public.

No, the heathen are *not* enlightened without means. Theirs is "a land of darkness, as darkness itself, and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness." It is, like the primitive chaos, "without form, and void, and darkness is on the face of the deep." God has not

*there* said, Let there be light: nor does the Spirit of the Lord move upon the face of the waters. Yet it is given for a possession to Immanuel. He will soon assert his right, enlighten all the earth, and bring all nations into his fold. He will send forth his *word*, and his *servants*, to prepare the way before him. Already is the work begun. Who, that loves Christ, or his brethren of the human family, can forbear to pray, Thy kingdom come; or to aid in this glorious and beneficent work? Those among us who pretend to revelations are frequently indifferent to missions, and sometimes oppose them. May the Lord forgive them that sin. If they shall be convinced the heathen are *perishing* for lack of vision, they may be willing to send them the gospel. And possibly if they shall see evidence that *the heathen* are not taught by the Spirit, they may begin to doubt *their own* inspiration also.

## CHAP. IX.

## *CONCLUSION.*

*Now of the things we have written, this is the sum:*— The Bible is the word of God; a full and sufficient guide to eternal life. It is proved by evidence, which shines with increasing lustre, the more closely it is examined, and the more violently it is assailed by enemies. All modern pretensions, *tried by the same rules* which we apply to the scriptures, *fail to produce a single mark of the hand of God.* We therefore conclude they are neither more nor less than the *strong delusions* which the scriptures forewarned us to expect in the present period. The fact is too solemn and momentous to be passed over here, that there is a *striking resemblance between those* revelations, and *those* which the Prophets and inspired men among the Jews so vehemently reproved in the name of Jehovah. Jer. 14. 14. "Then the Lord said unto me, the prophets phophesy lies in my name; I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a *false vision and divination*,

*and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart.*" Jer. 23. "Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you; they *make you vain; they* speak a *vision of their own heart*, and not out of the mouth of the Lord.—I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken unto them, yet they prophesied.—I have heard what the prophets said that prophesy lies in my name, saying, *I have dreamed, I have dreamed.*—The prophet (i. e. the false) that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully; what is the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD. Ezekiel 13. "Say unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts, Hear ye the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God, Woe unto the foolish prophets, *that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing.* If, therefore, satan is still lying in wait to deceive in this way, we have great need to observe the warning voice of Christ, saying, "Beware of false prophets."—And when any one is tempted to believe he is moved by the holy Ghost, or has a revelation, requiring him to go beyond the word of the Lord, as contained in scripture, to say *less* or *more*; he would do well to hearken to the counsel of Agur, "Every word of God is pure: He is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar."

If these things are so, then it is *important that all who believe their own inspiration or that of others, should seriously examine the subject.* If my little work should be favored with a reading from any such persons; I would entreat them, before I close, to suffer the word of exhortation, advice, and solemn but affectionate warning. If you have found any thing *reproachful* in these pages; *forgive* it, for Christ's sake. If you have found me dealing in confident unsupported *assertions;* let *them* pass for nothing. If you have found any clear and faithful *exhibition* of *facts*, let them be *duly weighed.* If you find any solid *reasoning*; remember that God has given *reason* to *you*, as well as to me, and for the purpose of being

used in its proper place. If you find arguments fairly supported from the *bible*; receive *that* portion, not as the word of man, but as it is in truth, *the word of the living God.* If all I have said has *convinced you of error*; for your own sake, for the truth's sake, and for Christ's sake, be entreated *honestly and totally to renounce it.* Fear not to renounce what you have long firmly believed, if you *do* see that it will not bear the test of God's word. To be established and unwavering in the *truth*, is desirable; but it is both *safe and honorable to change from error to truth*; to turn our feet from uncertain and dangerous ways, that they may be established on a Rock. If you find something here to shake your confidence *in a degree*, but *not sufficient* to convince you of the necessity of renouncing your revelations *entirely*; still be entreated to *examine* the subject again and again. Is not the question too momentous, to be left undecided; or to be decided hastily? Is it not evident, that *if* it be a delusion to follow every spirit, it may prove *fatal* to your soul? Give yourself therefore no rest till you have, by fervent prayer, by careful perusal of the blessed book, ascertained whether *that* is your only guide, or whether you can indeed place *equal* confidence in the imaginations of men. And may the *illuminating and sanctifying* grace of the Spirit throw divine light on your mind, and over the pages of sacred writ. May *you* be established in the truth of God, whether *I* have found it or not, and be made wise to eternal life.

If such dangerous delusions prevail, then *have we cause to prize, believe, and obey the bible.* It is indeed incalculably precious; and to me it never appears more so, than when I reflect on the strong delusions which would usurp its place, and subvert its precepts, doctrines, and sanctions. At all times it is "a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path." But doubly valuable, when satan, transformed into an angel of light, would delude our feet to stumble on the dark mountains. Therefore,

"Should all the forms that men devise,
Assault my faith with treacherous art;
I'll call them vanity and lies,
And bind the gospel to my heart."

This guide will never deceive us. Still the bible every where assures us it cannot save us, unless we obey from the heart the form of doctrine there delivered us. And if they are in danger of perishing, who turn away from the truth, and are turned unto fables; not less is the danger of such as hold the truth in unrighteousness; who believe the bible, and give it due honor, as their only guide; but do not the things it says.

If delusions abound in the world, I cannot here forbear *to sound the trumpet of alarm; and warn all who are in danger, against the influence of error.* And who is secure against danger, when satan comes with such lying wonders, and deceiveableness of unrighteousness? Especially are *children and youth* exposed. And all who have children to leave behind them in this ensnaring world; and all who have hearts to feel for the multitude who are coming on the stage, ignorant of what is before them, are called upon to train them up in the way in which they should go. If you would not see them falling into destruction, even with a strong persuasion that they are in the way to life, then warn them of their danger, and show them what the way of life is. Make them familiarly acquainted with *the bible:* with its *evidences*, its *authority*, and its sacred *contents*. Fear not the charge of book-religion and formality. It is true, knowledge cannot save them without grace; therefore you should give yourselves, your children, or your God, no rest, till Christ be formed in their heart, and they give evidence that they are the sheep of his pasture. But the knowledge of bible truth is the *appointed means* of their conversion. "That the soul be without knowledge, it is not good." Let the rising generation, like Timothy, from their very childhood "know the holy scriptures, which are able to make them wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." It is to

be feared, that while many will come from the east, and the west, and the north, and the south, to sit down in the kingdom of heaven; *the children of the kingdom* will be cast out; that *our* children, the next generation in this country, will be a generation of infidels; and the next succeeding, a generation of atheists. And what will the *spirits of our fathers* say to this? How will *they* reproach us for suffering the seed of the pilgrims to become despisers of the bible, and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. And it is my settled conviction that this will be the lamentable case with many sections at least of our favored land, unless the attention of men be called back to God's holy book; and unless far greater exertions, more systematic, prayerful and persevering, are soon made, to guide the hearts and feet of our youth into the ways of peace.

I do not despair of the bible cause: I do not doubt its final triumph. Truth is great; and will prevail. And these very delusions, which we lament or anticipate, are among the signs that the set time to favor Zion is near.—Satan comes in great wrath, knowing his time is *short*. Still it is painful to think of the multitude who may first stumble at the word, being disobedient, and fall, and perish. How consoling, yet how awful are the words of God to Daniel—"Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand." Surely it is a time for inquiring with unutterable anxiety for each other, and especially for ourselves, "who is on the Lord's side? Who? Who will come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty?" O, that we may have grace suitable to the day in which we live; on the one hand, a day of darkness, and gloominess, and fearful anticipations; on the other of unequalled light, and mercy, and joy. May we have grace to avoid the dangers, to fulfil the duties, and participate in the triumphs, of this eventful day.

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*Errata.*—Title page, for *added*, read *prefixed*. Introduction, for *subjoin*, read *prefix*, Page 34, bottom line, for *describe*, read *ascribe*.

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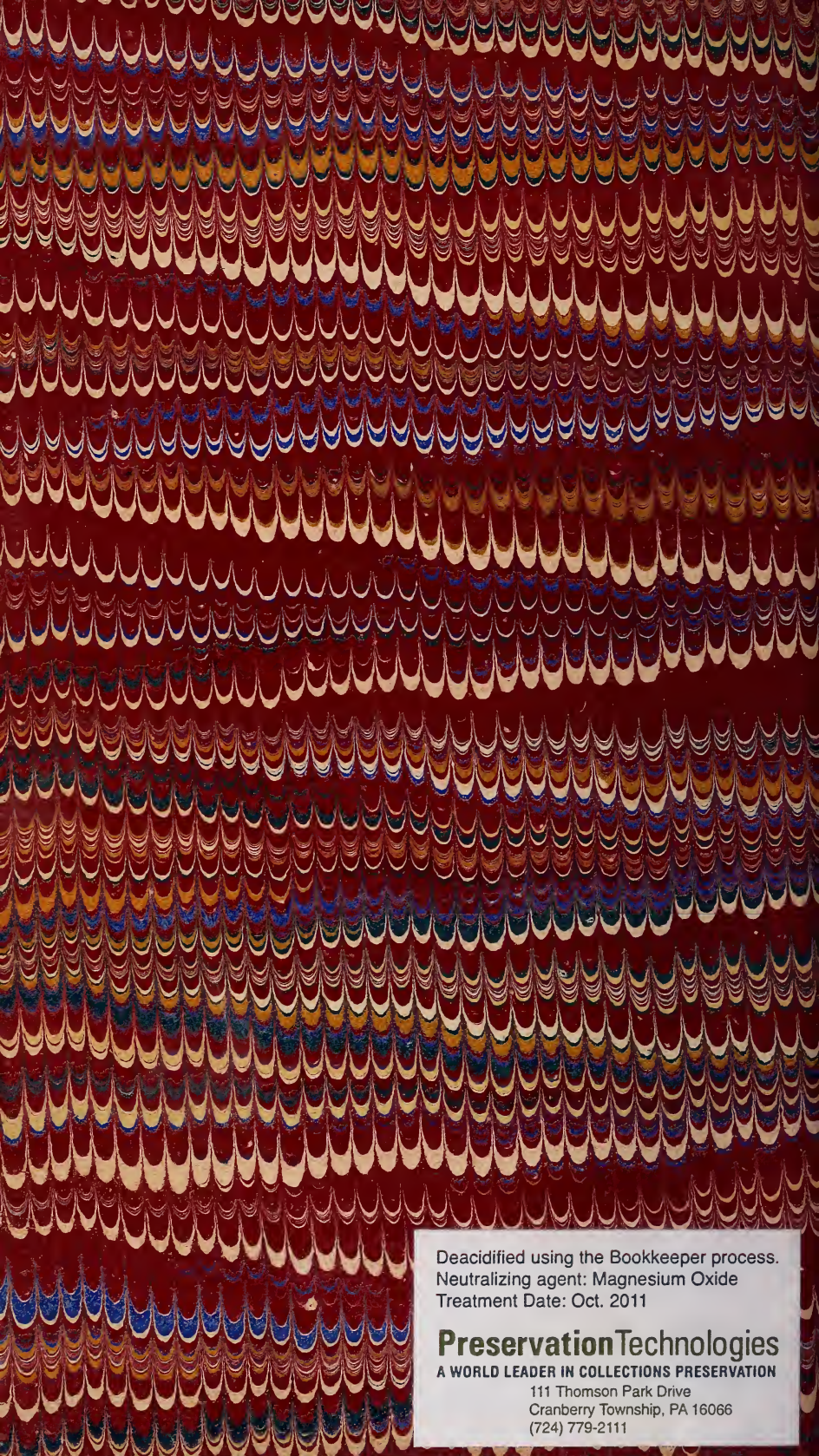

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